

Sports Illustrated

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**THE V-6
BUICKS**

SCORECARD

Edited by JERRY KIRSHENBAUM

REBELLING AGAINST THE REBELS

Booster clubs exert undue influence at many colleges, and the one at the University of Nevada at Las Vegas could hardly be expected to be any different. Often thought of as a renegade school when it comes to athletics, UNLV is situated in a city amply populated by the sort of high rollers most inclined to become boosters. But it wasn't until the arrival of a new athletic director who was determined to run a tight ship that the full extent of the power wielded by the UNLV's 1,500-member University Rebels Club became known.

The athletic director, Al Negratti, was hired last January at a time when UNLV had just come off a two-year NCAA probation for basketball recruiting violations. What's more, the athletic department was wallowing in \$575,000 worth of red ink. Negratti was supposed to clean up UNLV's act, financially and otherwise, and he reduced the deficit by \$200,000 by ordering a 30% cutback in expenditures in sports other than football and basketball and by sharply limiting the number of complimentary tickets lavished on coaches, university officials and the press. Negratti made some enemies in the process, and the atmosphere became more tense when an examination of the athletic department's ledgers resulted in the indictment of three officials—the sports ticket-office manager, the women's basketball coach and the sports information director—for embezzlement.

Things became stickier still when, last August, Negratti sought to see records of donations to the athletic department's scholarship fund, which is run by Associate Athletic Director Wayne Pearson and his assistant, David Pearl, UNLV's "booster coordinator." The scholarship fund is maintained by donations from well-heeled fans, who in return receive season basketball and football tickets and are accorded membership in the University Rebels Club. What makes things even cozier is that Pearson is a trustee of that club and Pearl its executive director;

Pearl draws salaries both from the club and from the university.

Although the scholarship fund was nominally administered by the athletic department, and despite the fact that Negratti was his boss, Pearson declined to give him access to scholarship-fund records. Instead, Pearson complained about Negratti's request to University of Nevada Chancellor Donald Baepfer. The school's regents then ordered that until further word, Pearson would be directly accountable to UNLV President Leonard Goodall and not to Negratti. Stung by that action and by resistance to his belt-tightening generally, Negratti submitted his resignation in October. Only then did the regents, apparently embarrassed, rule that the fund-raising office was, in fact, accountable to the athletic director. They also ordered an outside audit of Pearson's office. These decisions may have come too late. Negratti hasn't changed his mind about resigning, effective no later than June 30, and UNLV last week asked for a delay in an expected vote on its longstanding bid to join the Western Athletic Conference, whose officials had voiced understandable concern as to how much "institutional control" the school was exercising over its booster-dominated athletic department.

BULL'S-EYE

San Diego State didn't hold its traditional postseason football banquet this year, apparently because of the furor over the firing of the Aztecs' popular coach, Claude Gilbert (SCORECARD, Dec. 1). As a result, local businessmen are honoring Gilbert and his team this week at an impromptu banquet of their own. The site is the San Diego Police Department's firing range.

MONTICELLO OR BUST

Showing a group of visitors through Monticello, the Thomas Jefferson home near Charlottesville, Va., a tour guide pointed out busts of George Washington, Benjamin Franklin, John Paul Jones and

the Marquis de Lafayette and noted that of those four, only Lafayette had visited Monticello—and had, in fact, done so twice. "Make that three times," corrected one of her listeners. It seems that the visitors included the members of a basketball team competing in a tournament at the University of Virginia, the Leopards of Lafayette College.

BROAD STREET BENEFACTRESS

While this magazine hasn't had much good to say lately about the Philadelphia Flyers, their wives are another matter. One night each year they stage a carnival at the Spectrum, the building in which their menfolk toil as the NHL's most brazen brawlers, to raise money for leukemia research at Philadelphia's Hahnemann Hospital in memory of Barry Ashbee, the Flyer player and assistant



coach who died of the disease in 1977. This year's "Fight for Lives" carnival was held the other night, and nearly 6,000 people showed up to bid at auction for such items as one of Mike Schmidt's bats (purchase price: \$315) and a pair of Dr. J's size-15½ sneakers (a steal at \$100) and to be photographed, at \$5 a crack, with members of the Flyers, most of whom also turned out for the occasion. Carney-poers also got a chance to dunk Flyers Bobby Clarke and Reggie Leach in a baseball toss booth. Thanks in large part to corporate largess in buying advertising for the event, the wives raised \$175,000, swelling the take for leukemia research since the carnivals began to \$625,000.

Speaking of Flyer wives, it was, in a way, a costly trade that sent Flyer Defenseman Norm Barnes to the Hartford

continued



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HOW TO FOIL A CAR THIEF

A FEW SIMPLE PRECAUTIONS CAN REDUCE THE RISK OF THEFT

The numbers are staggering. Every 37 seconds or so a car is stolen somewhere in the U.S. That adds up to almost 800,000 cars a year. But you can do something to keep your car from becoming a statistic. Start by avoiding these four common parking mistakes.

The "Just for a Minute" Syndrome. When you leave your car, even if it's "just for a minute," lock all of the doors and take your keys. In fact, about one of every five cars stolen was left unattended with keys in the ignition. Keep driver's license and vehicle registration cards in your wallet or purse. If a car thief finds these documents in the vehicle's glove box, he can impersonate you if stopped by the police.

The Isolated Location. It's safest to park in a locked garage, but if you can't, don't leave your car in a dark, out-of-the-way spot. Instead, try to park on a busy, well-lighted street. Thieves shy away from tampering with a car if there's a high risk of being spotted.

The Display Case. There's nothing more inviting to a thief than expensive items lying in your car, in plain sight. If you lock these items in the trunk or glove box, there's less incentive for a thief to break in. Also, when you park in a commercial lot or garage, be cautious. Lock your valuables in the trunk, and leave only the ignition key with the attendant.

The Space at the End of the Block. In recent years, professional car-theft operations have become an increasing problem. Unlike amateurs, the professionals are not easily deterred. Cars parked at the end of a block are easy targets for the pro-

fessional thief with a tow truck. So, it's best to park in the middle of the block. Be sure to turn your steering wheel sharply to one side or the other. That will lock the steering column and prevent the car from being towed from the rear.

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Whalers recently for future considerations. Remember how Kate Smith's rendition of *God Bless America* used to fire up the Flyers at home games? Well, South had been succeeded by Barnes' wife, Cid, who had provided similar inspiration by ably singing the national anthem before Flyer games. So the Whalers may have gotten one more performer than they bargained for.

SOME FOR THE BOOKS

The academic abuses that rocked college sports in 1980 took a particularly heavy toll in the Pac-10, which declared five member schools ineligible for this year's conference football championship because of various infractions. But academics, we're glad to report, haven't gone out the window in the Pac-10 altogether, witness the classroom achievements of the following 23 players:

Offense: Gordon Adams, USC, quarterback; Mike Martin, Washington State, and Eugene Young, Oregon, running backs; Cormac Carney, UCLA, and Ken Margerum, Stanford, wide receivers; Tim Tyler, Oregon, tight end; John Macaulay, Stanford, center; Steve Johnson, Washington State, Don Mosebar and Keith Van Horne, USC, and Harvey Salem, California, linemen; and Chuck Nelson, Washington, placekicker. Defense: Duker Dapper, Stanford; Mark Jerue, Washington, and Kirk Karacoff, California, linemen; Ed Hagerty, Oregon, Jack Howley, Arizona, Milt McColl, Stanford, and Derek Warren, Oregon State, linebackers; Jeff Foles and Paul Sorensen, Washington State, Jeff Fischer, USC, and Mark Hattum, Oregon State, backs.

They all boast a B average or better, topped by Adams' 3.7 (of a possible 4.0 grade-point average, and collectively they comprise good news in what has otherwise been a very bleak year indeed for the conference. So let's hear it for them, the Pac-10's 1980 All-Academic team

ON GONNER, SLITZEN AND VIDEO

Until now, television sports have been largely confined (although that scarcely seems the right word) to live and taped coverage of real events. But suddenly the home screen is fairly bursting with simulated sports. Reason: an explosion during this Christmas shopping season of sales of home video games systems. These attach to ordinary TV sets and, thanks to programmed cartridges inserted into a master component, produce full-color,

amazingly lifelike computer-game action that can turn the screen into a playing field for practically any sport you can think of. With the flip of a lever or the twirl of a dial, armchair jocks can fire off a jump shot from the baseline, lay down a perfect bunt or gain big yardage on an off-tackle slant. Besides sports, they can also play video versions of blackjack, checkers and dozens of less familiar games.

Toy industry officials say that home video units have stolen the thunder of hand-held electronic games, last year's hot Christmas item, with sales of video systems growing from less than \$100 million in 1979 to as much as \$300 million this year. By contrast, sales of hand-helds are leveling off and are likely to be only slightly above last year's \$385 million.

The undisputed leader in home video games is Atari, a division of Warner Communications Inc. that also manufactures coin-operated arcade games. Atari's first big success was Pong, a tennis-style video game that seems primitive by today's standards; players endlessly hit a ball-like blip back and forth across the screen. Atari introduced coin-operated Pong games to cocktail lounges and amusement arcades in 1972, bringing out a home video offshoot in 1975. Three years ago it introduced the Atari Computer System, which now features more than 40 cartridges including, notably, a home video version of Space Invaders, which originated as a coin-operated game in Japan and has been the hottest thing in amusement arcades in the U.S. Though hardly cheap (master component \$180, cartridges \$22 to \$30 each), Atari will sell nearly 1 million master components this year and account for at least 65% of home video dollar sales.

Atari's competitors include Magnavox' Odyssey, APF Electronics' Imagination Machine and a host of home computer systems that offer games more or less on the side. But the most ambitious challenger is Mattel's Intellivision, which has broken new ground both in price (master component \$300, cartridges \$30 each) and in the realism and intricacy of its computer-game programming. Intellivision, which will be expanded next year to include a keyboard component, features crowds that roar, refs that blow whistles, basketball players who shake hands before the opening jump, umpires who cry "Yer out!" and base runners who

get caught in (and squirm out of) run-downs. Harry E. Wells III, a toys analyst at the Boston brokerage house of Adams, Harkness & Hill, enthuses, "Intellivision's graphics and programming capability are incredible." Of home video games generally, he says, "It's almost unprecedented for toys to cost this much—if, that is, you consider these things toys. If you do, well, there are going to be an awful lot of adult kids this Christmas."

THE CASE OF THE CREEPING KICKOFF

Ever hear of a team kicking off from its opponent's 15-yard line? Millersville (Pa.) State College did it last month during a 28-7 win over Cheyney (Pa.) State, and it came about this way: as Millersville attempted to convert a point-after touchdown in the second quarter, two 15-yard penalties were called against Cheyney, one for roughing the holder, the other for unsportsmanlike conduct. Because the conversion was good, the 30 yards were assessed on the subsequent kickoff, the result being that the ball was teed up at the Cheyney 30, not the Millersville 40. Then, just as Millersville's Mark Zeswitz was preparing to kick off, an official thought he heard a Cheyney player utter a profanity and assessed another penalty, also for 15 yards. Thus, Zeswitz wound up kicking off from the Cheyney 15. And what happened? Understandably reluctant to put his full leg into the ball, Zeswitz tried an onside kick. For the record, a Cheyney player fielded the ball on his 10 and returned it for a couple of yards.

THEY SAID IT

- Dave Bliss, SMU basketball coach, formerly at Oklahoma: "Football was No. 1 there and it should have been. The football team outscored us."
- Forrest Gregg, Cincinnati Bengal coach, defending his team's dress code: "We're getting paid executives' salaries and we should look like executives."
- Dale Clayton, Vanderbilt assistant basketball coach, on the effect of the three-referee system employed by the Southeastern Conference: "It just gives you one more to yell at."
- Kyle Barte, Lubbock (Texas) Christian College athletic committeeman, after the firing of Football Coach Jerry Don Saunders, who had a 1-18 record the past two seasons: "Let's face the facts. You can only take so many of these great lessons in humility."

END

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PHOENIX GOES ON THE ATTACK

A trade and lineup changes switching a forward to guard and a center to forward have turned the Suns into aggressors who are truckin' to the top

by JACK McCALLUM

ILLUSTRATION BY ANDY HOLT





How appropriate. Like the legendary bird that is their city's namesake, the Phoenix Suns have risen from the ashes and achieved new life in the NBA. The old Phoenix was unimposing on defense, unaggressive on the boards and often unassuming in the playoffs. The new Suns have a different personality, which is why they're leading the defending champion Lakers in the Pacific Division and have the second-best record in the NBA.

After splitting a pair of road games and losing to Portland in Phoenix last week, the Suns were two games up on Los Angeles and their 25-8 overall mark was surpassed only by that of Atlantic Division leader Philadelphia. But the 76ers' quick start was expected. After all, during the off-season, they didn't trade away Julius Erving, or move him from forward to guard, or install their third-string center at Dr. J's forward spot. The Suns made moves comparable to all three of the above. In the annals of NBA overhauls, the Suns' has to be one of the most dramatic—and successful.

It all started one day last summer when Coach John MacLeod was jogging along Camelback Road in Phoenix, contemplating the past and planning for the future. The Suns, he reasoned, were relying too much on finesse. The solution, he decided, was to move slender Walter Davis, an All-Star forward, to the backcourt and put someone with more muscle in his place. That would help the rebounding and make it easier to accommodate Paul Westphal, who was asking to be traded because he felt MacLeod's share-the-wealth system didn't give him enough playing time.

Westphal was more than just an All-NBA guard. He was perhaps the best and most popular player in the 13-season history of the franchise. Still, MacLeod and General Manager Jerry Colangelo had no reservations about trading Westphal to Seattle for Dennis Johnson, though were this an episode of *Shogun*, it would've seemed as if they were out to commit seppuku. After training camp opened, the final adjustment was made, MacLeod inserting Jeff Cook at the vacant forward spot. Jeff Who? Jeff Cook, the former

continued

Johnson, here dribbling past Chicago's Sam Worthington, feared the fans' wrath when he replaced "Sun god" Westphal, but they cheered instead.

Washington Lumberjack and MVP of the Western Basketball Association, Oh, that Jeff Cook.

Johnson has broken in smoothly at Phoenix despite the tough task of stepping into Westphal's guided sneakers. D.J. was the NBA playoff MVP in 1979, but his inconsistent shooting was blamed for the Sonics' third-round 4-1 playoff loss to Los Angeles last spring. Suddenly members of the Seattle organization were criticizing him not only for his 44% career shooting percentage but for becoming a loner, too. "I was really scared when I got here," he told SI's Roy S. Johnson last week. "Jerry Colangelo called me in and said that some people wouldn't like me because I was traded for Paul, whose name is right up there with the Sun god. When I came out to play an exhibition against the Olympic team, it was my first time in uniform and I was nervous. I was introduced last. And, boy, I got a four-or five-minute ovation and that made me feel a whole lot better."

Johnson is an acknowledged master of hard-nosed defense, and that talent, more than anything else, has defined the new Suns. Phoenix has bolted from eighth to second in team defense by yielding five fewer points a game. "D.J. is deadly on D," says Chicago Guard Reggie Theus. "I guess after he became known as an all-league defensive player, he got a license to kill." At week's end Johnson was scoring 17.7 points per game, 4.2 fewer than Westphal's 1979 average, but the Suns feel he has more than made up for that with his rebounding (4.2 a game), play making (3.5 assists a game) and tenacious defense.

"I had no hesitation about the changing of the guards," says Suns Forward Truck Robinson. "I hated to see Paul go. We were close and he's a great player. But what we needed was someone to neutralize the other high-scoring guards in the league. Shooters like Lloyd Free used to kill us. Now, they've had to work a lot harder to get their points." As for Johnson's bad-guy reputation, Davis says, "I can't believe all the things that were said about him. He's the nicest player I've ever known."

"Winning here is my goal," Johnson says. "Then I'll have two championship rings, one from Seattle [won in '79] and



Reluctant guard Davis is passing fancy in the backcourt

another from Phoenix. Some players don't even get one. I'll be able to go back up to Seattle and say, 'See, look what we've done.' That would be nice."

Davis' gradual adjustment to the backcourt may make that possible. He wasn't happy about being shifted to guard; he considered it an affront to his proven skills—he has a 23.1-point career average—though some others, San Antonio's George Gervin in particular, had made the same move pay off.

The Suns got several of their early victories almost despite Davis. While learning his new position, he lost his shooting touch. The third sharpest career shooter (54.9%) in NBA history entering this season—behind Artis Gilmore (55.9%) and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar (55.5%)—Davis shot only 47% through the Suns' opening 13 games. But he started regaining his touch two weeks ago, and he's now scoring 17.4 points per game, while shooting 53.1%.

"Walter was taken out of his comfort zone," says MacLeod. "He was frustrated with his mistakes. But with each one there was a lot of learning."

"I thought it was a demotion at first," Davis says. "I thought they had lost confidence in me. Even though I really didn't think the switch could be done, I know now it has been. I know because the other night the coach put me back at forward for a few minutes and it wasn't right. I couldn't wait to return to guard."

That enthusiasm was apparent in last week's 123-108 win at Chicago when Davis made a pass on the fast break that led to a score. "He was so excited he jumped four feet into the air," said Johnson. Davis also responded to a flashy assist by D.J. by rearing back and giving him a high-five that was so hard, said Johnson, "I thought he'd break my hand."

The 24-year-old Cook, who resembles a 6'10" Huck Finn, has added his own brand of high-spiritedness—his specialty is seeking out teammates who are listening to music through headphones and slyly turning the volume up. More important, he has given Phoenix better rebounding. Cook already has three more offensive rebounds than Davis had all of last season. And though Cook isn't a true power forward—

that role still belongs to Robinson, who's three inches shorter—he has freed Robinson to move around more and to operate facing the basket.

Despite all the notice given the backcourt changes and Cook's performance, many experts think the real difference in the Suns has been the play of Truck

Robinson came to the Suns in January of 1979 from New Orleans, where he'd led the league in minutes played, rebounding and, some observers said, selfishness. He says it was a hum rap and that the New Orleans system simply called for him to do too much. "I had a no-trade clause in my contract, so I asked to leave." Truck said last week, before scoring a season-high 40 points in the win over Chicago. Robinson selected Phoenix as the place he'd like to play because of the presence of Davis at small forward. Fortunately, it hasn't bothered Robinson now that Davis has moved outside. He's scoring slightly less than 20 points a game and getting 10.5 rebounds, while playing about 38 minutes a game, six more than Johnson, who is second in court time. None of the other Suns starters plays

more than 30 minutes on the average.

The presence of Truck, Cook and two guards who can operate down low has taken some pressure off Alvan Adams, the former Eagle Scout who is in his sixth season as the Suns' starting center. Adams, a model-train buff who frequently asks people when their homes were built because he likes old houses, sneaks through defenses hitting soft jumpers at a 52% clip and delivering passes most other pivotmen wouldn't dare to try. But Adams has only 210 pounds on his 6' 9" frame and often he has been outbunkled. When it became obvious that Phoenix would have to make a change, some Suns thought it was Adams who would go. But the added rebounding of Cook and D.J. has apparently eliminated that shortcoming. Phoenix was next to last and last in rebounding the past two seasons; the Suns have been in the top four all this season, even though Adams' seven a game is 17th among starting NBA centers. "Yeah, baby, we've been doing some glassin'," says Johnson.

Phoenix was tested at the center spot last week when Adams missed three games with a bruised back. Rich Kelley did an excellent fill-in job as Phoenix won two of them. The unkempt Kelley is a major force in keeping Phoenix loose. On the plane from Chicago to Indianapolis last week, some of the Suns noticed that his hair was much neater than usual. "I'm just trying to get my do together," Kelley told them. When he's not performing that hairy mission, Kelley turns his attention to inducing Kyle Macy, the rookie guard from Kentucky, to drink a whole beer, a feat Macy has yet to accomplish.

The Suns appear to have gotten the better of the Johnson-Westphal exchange, especially seeing as Westphal was knocked out of action in the Sonics' 10th game with an injury to his right foot. "These guys have ironed a lot of things out," says MacLeod. "They've subjugated themselves to the team's system. We'd gone about as far as we were going to with that other bunch."

The big question is whether this bunch

can beat the Lakers. With all of its success this season, Phoenix has still stumbled against L.A. The Suns were unable to take advantage of Abdul-Jabbar's absence in a 116-109 road loss on Oct. 17, or Magic Johnson's absence in a 116-88 road defeat on Nov. 21. And they barely beat the Lakers, 102-99, in Phoenix on Nov. 20, again with Magic out of the L.A. lineup. The key may be keeping Robinson healthy, because power forward is the only position at which the Suns have a clear advantage over the Lakers. Strained left knee ligaments caused Truck to miss last season's 4-1 semifinal playoff loss to L.A.

Some of the Suns would like to win the title to repay the fans for not storming the team offices when Westphal was traded. Kelley thinks he knows why they didn't, offering the offbeat theory that the sunshine makes the Phoenix fans feel positive about almost anything. "Makes 'em kind of passive, you know," he says. They used to say that about Phoenix' basketball team, too, but not anymore. **DND**

Cook (below left) and Robinson (below right), both playing defense against Indiana's George McGinnis, have given the Suns a pair of formidable forwards



BIG WHEELS MAKE BIG DEALS IN BIG D

They were playing fair-ies, top-sies and knock-sies with live players in Dallas last week at the 79th official baseball meetings. Whitey Herzog, manager and general manager of St. Louis, shuffled a whole lot of Cards by trading away six pitchers, three catchers, two infielders and one outfielder for four pitchers, two catchers and an outfielder. The popular term of endearment for Herzog is the White Rat, and he lived up to his nickname as he scurried through the suites and cocktail lounges of the Loews Anatole Hotel, packing away players.

Even before Herzog made his first deal, the winter meetings—held annually in the fall—had a touch of the huarre. The Loews Anatole Hotel is a striking example of an architectural style that can only be called Texas-Egyptian. During the week Deena the Chimp, the San Diego Chicken and Max Patkin, Clown Prince of Baseball, were trying to outgum each other to get minor league bookings for 1981. By the time the zanyness ended at midnight on Friday, 17 trades, some of them blockbuster, had been consummated. Fred Lynn and Ron Gaudy were shipped around like third-string catchers. One manager lost his job and his lunch in one fell swoop. And Hank Peters, the Orioles' general manager, proudly announced that his daughter had given birth to a baby "to be named later."

These meetings were a delightful departure from the killjoy confabs of recent years. There were 58 players traded, the most since 1975. The inauguration of free agency (in 1976) and a second inter-league trading period (in 1977) had been responsible for the decline. Now the owners seem infused with more traditional values. Besides, as Chicago White Sox General Manager Roland Hemond said, "It's a lot more fun trading a player than signing him."

Even so, it was Herzog's signing of a free agent, Catcher Darrell Porter, on Sunday, Dec. 7 that set off his Whirl Series of trades. On Monday, Herzog and Padres General Manager Jack McKeon unveiled an 11-player deal, which baseball-card collectors immediately recognized as a variation on two Tom Staudt deals for one Harvey Kuenn. The most

A surprising amount of talent—58 players in all—got shuffled around, especially by the Cards, at baseball's annual winter meetings in Dallas **by STEVE WULF**

noteworthy names were Pitcher Rolie Fingers and Catcher Gene Tenace of San Diego and Catcher Terry Kennedy of St. Louis. "I plan to see you guys every day," Herzog vowed to reporters at his press conference. "If I do it all in one day, I'll have to go home."

Sure enough, the White Rat was back Tuesday afternoon to announce he had just gotten Relief Pitcher Bruce Sutter from the Cubs for Third Baseman Ken Reitz, Outfielder-First Baseman Leon Durham and a player to be named later. Cubs General Manager Bob Kennedy said he was happy with the trade, though not as happy as he would've been if he'd got his son, Terry. Herzog said the trade took about 74 phone calls to make. "The general manager is doing a great job," said Herzog. "Now if the manager doesn't screw up, we're in great shape." So, just two days into the meetings, Herzog found himself with two of the best relievers in the game—between them, Sutter and Fingers had 51 saves last season, 24 more than the whole Cardinal staff—and three first-rate catchers: Porter, Tenace and Ted Simmons. He clearly had some more dealing in mind.

That materialized on Friday when Herzog and Milwaukee General Manager Harry Dalton announced that the Cardinals were sending Fingers, Simmons and Righthander Pete Vuckovich to the Brewers for Outfielder Sixto Lezcano, Righthander Larry Sorenson and two minor-leaguers. "Now I have to leave to catch a plane," said Herzog. "Goodbye."

The Herzog trades were actually a lot of sound and fury that seem to signify very little for the Cardinals; they may, in fact, have done more harm than good. All Herzog really added was Sutter, while losing the switch-hitting Simmons, one of the game's half dozen toughest outs, in the process. The sleeper in the deal with the Brewers may be Outfielder Dave Green, a 20-year-old Nicaraguan who reminds some baseball people of Roberto Clemente. "You haven't heard of him yet," said Dalton, who was very reluc-

tant to give Green up, "but you will." The Brewers are going for broke in 1981 because both Vuckovich and Fingers can become free agents at the end of next season. Milwaukee also had to throw in a reported \$750,000 to persuade Simmons and his agent, LaRue Harcourt, to waive the 10-and-5 rule, otherwise known as the Santo Clause: a player with 10 years' experience in the majors and at least five years with the same team can veto a trade, as Ron Santo first did.

Milwaukee seemed to have helped itself the most. Simmons is the best catcher the Brewers have ever had, and Fingers gives them their first solid reliever since Ken Sanders in the early '70s.

The other big trade of the week came on Wednesday when the Red Sox sent Shortstop Rick Burleson and Third Baseman Butch Hobson to the Angels for Third Baseman Carney Lansford, Pitcher Mark Clear and Outfielder Rick Miller. Lansford is a prize, but what the Red Sox really need—as usual—is pitching, and Clear has performed rather murkily since the first half of his rookie season, 1979. Why would Boston give up one of the three best shortstops in baseball? It happens that Burleson's contract expires at the end of next season, and the Red Sox held little hope of signing him.

Therein lies the twist of these meetings. Many teams were suddenly glad to unload even the best of players, preferring an already-signed or easier-to-sign lesser performer to an expensive one bound for free agency. That's why the Red Sox were so anxious to unload Lynn, who is in the last year of his contract. One of their proposed deals would have sent Lynn to the Dodgers in the wee small hours of Thursday morning. The two teams had been talking all week. After Boston General Manager Haywood Sullivan announced the Burleson deal with the Angels at 11 p.m., he and his new manager, Ralph Houk, went up to the L.A. suite to meet with their Dodger counterparts, Al Campanis and Tommy Lasorda. At about midnight they agreed

on the players: Lynn for Pitchers Steve Howe and Joe Beckwith and minor league First Baseman Mike Marshall. In order to avoid charges of tampering, Bill Murray of the commissioner's office was brought in to oversee the Dodgers' negotiations with Lynn, whom they wanted to tie to a long-term contract right away. Campanis tried unsuccessfully to raise Lynn's agent, Jerry Kapstein, in San Diego and had to phone Lynn instead. Lynn was told of the trade and asked to contact Kapstein. At 1:30 a.m. Kapstein called back, and Murray told him he would send the necessary telegram immediately, granting L.A. permission to talk contract.

About 2:30 Kapstein called back and said he had received the telegram and would set up a conference call with the Dodgers, himself, Lynn and Lynn's wife, Dede. With everyone on the line 25 minutes later, Kapstein asked for a one-year contract at an undetermined price, and the Dodgers countered with five years for a reported \$5 million. The Dodgers asked Kapstein to call back with another proposal. At this point the Dodgers were

very grateful the hotel had all-night room service, having gone through several helpings of frozen yogurt and fruit and a dozen sandwiches. Kapstein was on the line again at 4 a.m. with the same one-year offer. Lynn didn't mind L.A.; he just wanted to keep his options open for a future free-agent plunge. Campanis said no change, no deal, and at 4:20 the Dodgers told Sullivan the trade was off.

Yankee owner George Steinbrenner had a go at Lynn later in the week. In one variation, New York envisioned an outfield of Lynn, Reggie Jackson and the then-unsigned free agent, Dave Winfield. New York was offering Boston Guidry, who will also become a free agent next October, and either of two outfielders, Ruppert Jones or Bobby Brown. In a second attempt, the Yankees offered Jackson for Lynn straight up. The Mets, too, made an offer, but they literally and figuratively were out of their league.

Agents helped make trades, too. Harcourt talked his client Reitz into going to Chicago, although it took \$150,000 from the Cubs to persuade Reitz to waive his no-trade clause. Harcourt also tried

to get \$1 million for Simmons in exchange for Simmons' 10-and-5 waiver, but settled for about 250 grand less. Dalton said making the deal with the Cardinals was a lot easier than making it with Harcourt. "He's the slowest talker I've ever met," said Dalton.

"The owners are learning to live with free agency," said Harcourt, a former junior college business teacher from Cerritos, Calif. "I'm not here to kill deals. I'm here to make everybody happy."

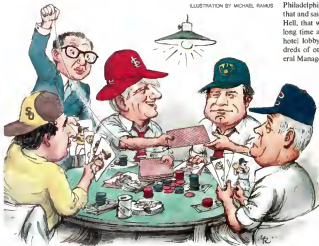
"Many clubs are willing to move quality ballplayers and complicated contracts," said Sullivan. "But there's another reason for all the deals. It's this hotel. Everyone can find each other. It's great for baseball people and media people, too. I wish I had the notebook concession."

There was other activity as well. Houston set a record for free-agent extravagance by giving utility man Dave Roberts a five-year, \$1.1 million contract. The Giants fired their manager, Dave Bristol, while the managers' luncheon was going on. No wonder he didn't show. San Francisco owner Bob Lurie issued a short statement citing "philosophical differences" as the reason for the dismissal. Philadelphia Manager Dallas Green read that and said, "Philosophical differences. Hell, that would have gotten me fired a long time ago." Bristol was back in the hotel lobby the next day, joining hundreds of other job-seekers. Texas General Manager Eddie Robinson, who used

to work for the Braves, said to Bristol, "When I hired you in Atlanta, I said you were a fiery manager. Well, you sure do get fired a lot." Last week made four times.

The Indians acquired malcontented Pitcher Bert Blyleven and contented Catcher Manny Sanguillen from the Pirates for Catcher Gary Alexander and Pitchers Bob Ojswick, Victor Cruz and Rafael Vazquez. It was the third winter session in a row at which Vazquez had been traded. The major disappointment of the week was that Bobby Bonds wasn't traded. It just wasn't in the cards.

ILLUSTRATION BY MICHAEL RAMUS



As general managers put on poker faces (from left: McKeon, Herzog, Dalton, Kennedy), agent Harcourt pulled strings.

The late Nolan Richardson I was a light heavyweight who marked time on undercards in Cuba and Mexico and, according to the old pugs at ringside, "punched in a lot of faces." Nolan Richardson III is a high school sophomore who got tired of his nickname, No No, and changed it on his basketball uniform to Notes because, as he explained, "By the time the game's over and I've done my pg, y'all be taking notes." And then there's Nolan Richardson II. All Nolan Richardson II is is 43-1 over the last 13 months.

This Nolan Richardson, 38, is the son and father of the other Nolan Richardsons and the coach of the University of Tulsa Golden Hurricane, which just happens to be the phenomenon of the early season in college basketball. With a gold whistle hanging down the décolletage of his Quana shirt, a color-coordinated boutonniere arranged just so on his lapel and a gang of four trailing in his wake, Richardson came out of Western Texas Junior College in Snyder (pop. forget it) and made some moves. He redecorated the Tulsa locker room, changed the uniforms, added a theme song, got rid of the mascot—fans kept throwing trash down the hole in the top of the costume—and, over a recent five-day period, masterfully guided his team as it 1) upset cross-city rival Oral Roberts, which Tulsa hadn't beaten in eight tries, 2) upset cross-state rival Oklahoma, which Tulsa hadn't beaten in five years, and 3) upset Louisville, the defending NCAA champion and the likes of which Tulsa hadn't beaten ever.

The victory over Louisville actually began this sequence and was such heavy stuff that Richardson was widely reported to have announced, "I did a heck of a job and I'm taking credit for it." Now he insists that quip was misinterpreted. A few weeks in the big time and he already has learned how to be misquoted.

After Western Texas—not to be confused with West Texas State or Texas Western or Country and Western—had won the 1980 national junior college championship with a 37-0 record and after virtually the same cast of characters had led Tulsa to a 5-0 mark to start off the 1980-81 campaign, it began to look as if Richardson and his sidekicks might never lose. The coach had ignored that

THE HURRICANE IS BLOWING UP A STORM

The coach and four players from last year's junior college championship team have made Tulsa the season's surprise

by CURRY KIRKPATRICK

ancient cowboy caution, "Don't take your guns to town," and brought to Tulsa four of his own J.C. players, plus a fifth who had led Jefferson (Ala.) State to the runner-up spot in the junior college tournament. Living on defense, the Golden Hurricane had 59 steals, forced 119 turnovers and limited the opposition to 39.6% field-goal shooting before it all came crashing down in the final minutes last Friday night against Georgia, 66-64.

Afterward, Richardson said he was relieved to finally lose—not since March 1979 had one of his teams been defeated—but there was nary a dry eye in the locker room. Phil Spradling, the skinny 6'4" guard who barely missed a 12-foot jump shot that would've tied it at the buzzer, said, "It hurts like nothing in my life before." And David Brown, the forward with the gold front tooth, the talker, the jester, was nearly speechless. "Now I know how Louisville and all those other teams we dumped on feel," he said. "This is terrible."

The following evening, however, Tulsa continued its once-interrupted march toward the Top 20, where the Hurricane just might belong, by routing Tulane 102-85.

Aside from Spencer Haywood, has anyone ever come out of the junior college basketball ranks and created such an immediate star as this? But then, Richardson has been an overachiever all his life. Known as Sweet Sam back in the South Side barrio of El Paso—"as ghetto to us a ghetto can be," Richardson says—"I'm from a place I never want to go back to"—he was your basic amazing athlete, escaping life through sports. Many sports. After starring for Don Huskins at Texas Western (now UTEP), Richardson briefly played pro basketball

for the Dallas Chaparrals of the ABA and pro football for the San Diego Chargers of the AFL. In college he was offered a contract to play baseball for the Houston Astros. As a frequent partner of Lee Trevino, Richardson also listened to the entreaties of high rollers who wanted to sponsor him on the pro golf tour. This was an athlete, this one.

After coaching 12 years at Bowie High in El Paso and three years at Western Texas (J.C. record, 101-13), Richardson figured he'd paid his dues and applied for a Division I job at three schools, SMU, Cal State-Fullerton and Tulsa. He knew the percentages weren't with him. "Thirteen black coaches in major situations," Richardson snaps back when asked, "But I knew there was a job out there looking for me." After Tulsa President J. Paschal Twyman interviewed him, Richardson was No. 14.

"Nolan bowled us over with charisma," says Twyman. "There was a race factor, to be sure. Tulsa's population is about 11% black but we did our homework. We asked around the community and felt out our booster club. We'd been losing for five years, attendance was down, the program was at the bottom, and it was having an impact on our budget. We knew we were breaking some ice here, but we decided to fly with it. We needed to win badly."

In search of the quickest solution, Tulsa officials went after the junior college-champion coach and ended up with practically an entire team. "I saved them a ton in the recruiting budget," says Richardson.

Richardson had become so close to his four best players at Western that in the recruiting scuffle only Brown visited any school besides Tulsa. "But I knew I'd follow my heart," he says. The new Hurricane quartet may need no introduction to aficionados of the junior college game, but for those who were reading the *Burns* Shave signs on the bus tour through Snyder, here they are:

PHOTOGRAPH BY JOHN IACONO

• **Brown** A 5' 10" high school junior when one of Richardson's assistant coaches, Andy Stoglin, discovered him on the El Paso playgrounds. Grew 10 inches in three years and is now the Hurricane's leading scorer and rebounder. "He'll fight the devil," Stoglin told Richardson. Sure enough. Achieved instant fame when Louisville's massive Wiley Brown sucker-punched him from behind. Afflicted with instant insanity, he wanted to fight back. Was restrained. "I was the enforcer and here I was getting enforced," says Brown. "I wanted Wiley bad. I used to chill dudes in JUCO."

• **Spreading** Another El Paso native who once scored 40 points against Richardson's high school team. Spent freshman year at New Mexico as injured red-shirt, then transferred to Western Texas. Charlie Chaplin mustache. The Hurricane's only true outside scoring threat.

• **Greg Stewart**, 6' 9" center from the Bronx. Sent out west by Richardson's friend, Tiny Archibald of the Celtics, who told Stewart that Richardson would make "a someone" out of him. "You hear about all the trouble on the streets of New York?" says Stewart. "Well, I was some of the trouble."

• **Paul Pressey**, 6' 5" guard-forward from Richmond, Va. MVP in JUCO national tournament. Tulsa's floor leader and best player. "Don Chaney type," says Richardson, meaning Pressey has defensive instincts of burglar and wingspan of eagle. Almost too cool, nonchalant. Maybe the finest passer in college.

Richardson is painfully aware of the stigma attached to a junior college-based program. "For three years I heard nothing but the word outlaw," he says, "but it's a bad rap. We didn't just run up and down the floor. We got our 101s [Western averaged 101 points a game] off our defense."

When Louisville came to Tulsa, it must have felt as if a swarm of locusts had descended during its 68-60 loss (a more decisive beating than DePaul administered the Cards). "They came in here half-step-pin" it," says Pressey, "but we treated it like it was the NCAA champs against the JUCO champs, which it was. The difference at this level? The crowds are bigger, that's all. We can get it on with anybody." Or, as the team theme song says, *Ain't No Stoppin' Us Now*. **END**



Brown dunked this one against Georgia, but his and Tulsa's win streaks got slammed by the 'Dogs



If Ted Brown (23) of the Vikings had wings, he could have flown over these linemen and touched down in the end zone. As it was, he went wide for a short gain.

WHEN THE DUST CLEARED, IT WAS MINNESOTA

No other team wanted it, so the Vikings won the poverty-pocked NFC Central title on a last-play Hail Mary touchdown pass of 46 yards **by PAUL ZIMMERMAN**

Someday, when Pete Rozelle's parity program has been honed and refined and worked out to the ultimate decimal point, all five NFC Central teams will have 8-8 records; all will be 1-1 head-to-head; all will have identical records against division, conference and common opponents; all will have the same number of net points. And as they hand out silver dollars for an orgy of coin flipping at the NFL office at 410 Park Avenue in New York, Rozelle will lean back, smile and say, "We've finally done it. We've achieved absolute parity. We've kept everybody in the race."

Ah, parity, thy name is NFC Central,

that great gray swamp where, like Kipling's world east of Suez, "the best is like the worst", where after 15 weeks of combat only three losses separate the leader from the Meeder; where the first-place team, Minnesota, couldn't come close to defeating one of the division's dogs, Green Bay, in two outings; where anyone can beat anyone else; and where you can honestly say no team is better than another. Close your eyes. Are those the Green Bay Vikings you see out there? The Detroit Bucs? The Chicago Lions? Is there no breaking out of a landscape as barren as Siberia?

Wait a minute, here comes Minnesota

The Vikings clinched the division title Sunday by beating Cleveland 28-23 in Bloomington. Here's how they did it—up to their Hail Mary pass at the end:

—Loused up two potential touchdowns with a holding penalty and an illegal pass beyond the line of scrimmage. Then were wide on the two field goal attempts they had to settle for.

—Blew three of four extra points. This, coupled with the two missed field goals, made it "the worst day of my life" for Kicker Rick Danneier.

—Set up two Cleveland touchdowns with face-mask and head-slap penalties.

—Blew an onside kick. It traveled only nine yards.

But as Chicago General Manager Jim Finks says, "The Vikings stop around and don't do much of anything, but they're never really out of it, and pretty soon they bring you down to their level."

Their level Sunday was a first down on their 20 with 14 seconds to play and

no more time-outs. So Quarterback Tommy Kramer, who threw for 456 yards against the Browns, hit a first-year tight end named Joe Sener, who was best known at West Chester State as a basketball player. Sener laterated to Ted Brown, who ran out of bounds on the Cleveland 46. "A sandlot play," Viking Coach Bud Grant called it. "We made it up on the sidelines the last time Cleveland had the ball." And then came the finale: three wide receivers on the right side, running like hell downfield, covered by five Browns—more than a third of the players on the field gathered in one little corner. Kramer lobbed the ball toward the goal line, the Vikes' Sammy White and the Browns' Thom Darden leaped and tipped it near the four, Minnesota's Ahmad Rashad caught it at about the two, scored, and the Vikings had their 11th division title.

Atlanta calls that play Big Ben. San Francisco 49er Coach Bill Walsh calls it "ugly football": the game was never meant to be played that way. In the Viking playbook it's Squadron Right, Squadron Fly—tighten your silk scarves,

boys, and let's win one for the RAF.

That's the NFC Central Class we ain't got, but we're all in this swamp together. Tampa Bay tried to break out last season. A mere three years after joining the NFL, the Bucs burst to the top of the NFC Central with a 10-6 record. They even had a playoff victory. Cigars all around. Just wait till 1980. But the swamp got them, dragged them back. Not so fast, young fella. You must learn to march with the rest of the pack. You must reacquaint yourself with our constant companion, mediocrity. Tampa Bay is now the division's worst team, along with Green Bay. But until Dec. 7 the Bucs had a shot at the playoffs. That was the day they lost to the Vikings 21-10 and Coach John McKay, who had been criticized for publicly censuring his players, said that henceforth he would use the word "lovely" to describe his team's performances. "We just blew it," McKay said, referring to a 10-point lead that had evaporated. "I don't know who I can blame that on because all the players played lovely."

Detroit was walking the high ground in September. The Lions were 4-0 and

snapping their fingers while dancing to the tune of their new theme song—*Another One Bites the Dust*. Their sensational rookie, Billy Sims, looked as if he'd run right out of the Silverdome. A local paper ran a contest to choose a nickname for Sims. Silver Streak edged some 37,000 other entries, including Bye Bye Billy, The Renaissance Man, The Roaring 20, Dandy Lion, Secretary of Offense, Quick Silver, Billy The Kid and The Flyin' Lion. The Silver Streak couldn't save Detroit. The swamp got the Lions, too. They lost seven of their next 10 and watched Minnesota creep by.

Last Sunday the Lions kept their wild-card hopes flickering—their only chance was for Los Angeles to lose its final two—by beating Tampa Bay 27-14 in a game that was notable only because 1) the Lions were the NFL's No. 1 rushing team but gained only 68 yards on the ground, and 2) Detroit kicker Eddie Murray hit the crossbar on one field-goal try and the upright on another.

As for Chicago, it took six weeks for the Bears to find a quarterback, but by then they were 2-4 and sink—



No it's about it. Billy (Silver Streak) Sims of the Lions took wing, soaring over the line for this one-yard touchdown in Detroit's 27-14 win over Tampa Bay.



While McKay was calling for help at Detroit, Grant was wearing a championship smile in Minnesota.



Kramer frustrated Lyle Alzado and all the Browns as he completed 38 of 49 passes for 456 yards.

ing out of sight. "If I were the coach, I'd bench me next week," a disconsolate Mike Phipps said after his four interceptions set up a 13-7 loss to the Vikings in the sixth week of the season. Nobody argued. The next week Vince Evans was at quarterback, and on Dec. 7 he led Chicago to a 61-7 rout of the Packers. At half-time the Bears found out they had been mathematically eliminated from playoff contention, and then they went out and scored 33 points. There was much head shaking and finger pointing on the Green Bay side, something about running it up.

But last Sunday the Bears regressed. They didn't bother to try a medium-range field goal that could have beaten Cincinnati at the end of regulation time, throwing an end-zone interception instead. They lost 17-14 in OT.

The Packers had been everyone's choice for NFL Worst in '80, but one rule of the NFC Central is that if no team rises too high, none sinks too low, either. Mediocrity has saved Bart Starr's job for one more year.

In mid-October Minnesota was 3-5 and had scored exactly one touchdown in its last 12 quarters. The sharpshooters were saying, "It's finally come. The ultimate fade." But, no. The Vikings have now won six of their last seven.

And so, in ascending order, this is the NFC Central with one week to play:

TAMPA BAY (5-9-1)—Three weeks ago McKay said he might resign after the 1981 season. He said he'd quit after this year if he determined he was the cause of the decline. He says a lot of things. Not to worry. Before the end of last season his contract reportedly was extended by five years, through 1984. The kicker is that if McKay quits as coach, he gets to move into the president's office. Don't get jumpy, Ron, that's president of the Bucs. McKay has gotten really mad only once this year, when a Texas writer said Buc Quarterback Doug Williams is dumb. The rest of the time he has kept the pencils busy with his one-liners.

Before a preseason game with St. Louis. "I think Jim Hanifan made a good decision in naming Jim Hart as his starting quarterback. How the hell do you spell Pisarkiewicz?"

When the Bucs traded for Gary Davis, giving them four running backs named Davis. "The reason for the deal is pure and simple: we have four shirts with Davis on them. It's cheaper to trade than to change the name on a shirt." continued

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Asked which was worse, a 23-0 loss to Chicago or a 14-14 tie with Green Bay: "You can't pick the better of two worsts."

GREEN BAY (5-9-1)—For the first time in NFL history a pair of Bays, Green and Tampa, are tied for last in their division. No one really expected much else from the Packers. The question is: what took them so long? Remember the preseason? First we were wondering whether Starr would be fired right then and there. No sooner had that cloud blown away when another one appeared—in the shape of a hot dog. Defensive End Ezra Johnson was seen eating a frank on the bench during a 38-0 preseason blowout by the Broncos, and the cavalier manner in which Starr handled this—he gave Johnson a slap on the wrist—so annoyed Assistant Coach Fred von Appen that he quit.

Then the players started grumbling about Starr. They called him J.R., in honor of J.R. Ewing who got his in *Dallas*. So after Green Bay's first regular-season game, in which the Packers beat the Bears in overtime when Chester Marcol scooped up his blocked field goal and toddled into the end zone—"He looked like the man in the New York Life commercial," said Bear Kicker Bob Thomas—Starr showed up with a cigar, a cowboy hat and a Western shirt with a J.R. monogram on the pocket. Ah, peace for a week, but as the days grew shorter and mediocrity took its iron hold, the grumblings started again.

"This is Starr's sixth year," one Packer said after the 61-7 loss to the Bears. "Six long years of excuses, close losses, flat teems and mental mistakes. Good grief, enough is enough."

CHICAGO (6-9)—Call this the apologetic season. A 28-17 loss to Atlanta turned on a Walter Payton fumble that really wasn't a fumble. The league office apologized, and incidentally, Walter, you don't have to pay that \$200 fine for grabbing Head Linesman Ed Marion. Just don't do it again, O.K.? And, yes, the league apologized to the Bears for the interference penalty that set up the field goal that gave Philadelphia a 17-14 win. Seems it wasn't really interference after all. And, oh yes, the shovel pass off the fake field goal that gave the Oilers a 10-6 victory... well, the films showed an ineligible Oiler downfield. Sorry about that.

"Right now there's no question we're the best team in the division," Finks said after the 61-7 victory over Green Bay,

pointing out that the offense had opened up considerably since Evans took over at quarterback. Coach Neill Armstrong had been getting beat for his no-pass, let-Walter-do-it attack, so when it came down to the last 20 seconds against Cincinnati last week, with the ball on the Bengals' 18 and the score tied, it was time to show 'em, dammit! Two end-zone passes, the second one intercepted, pushed the game into overtime, and Cincinnati won.

DETROIT (8-7)—Another *One Bites the Dust* came back to haunt the Lions. After the Colts beat Detroit 10-9 on Nov. 16, the Lions' fifth loss in seven games, a local disc jockey named Dick Purtan introduced a parody: Another *One Bears Our Butts*. Coach Monte Clark showed up at his weekly press conference in fake glasses, rubber nose and false mustache. "Hello, I'm Dick Purtan and I'm here to introduce my new song," Clark said. "I must say that I like it better than the first version." Wait, it gets better. When the Cards ran a punt back all the way to beat the Lions in St. Louis two weeks ago—it was the second game in a row that Detroit lost on a runback—the band struck up *Another One Bites the Dust* and the Cardinals mocked and taunted the Lions, just as the Detroit players had done when they beat St. Louis in September. When Minnesota beat Detroit 34-0, the Vikings sang that song, too, and one of them threw dust at the crowd in Bloomington.

The Lions might still be singing it, one by one, their offensive line hadn't bit the dust with injuries and their quarterback, Gary Danielson, hadn't been bothered by nb, shoulder and ankle miseries. "Everybody's making such a big deal about that song," Danielson says. "Last year we were 2-14 without a song."

MINNESOTA (9-6)—When you figure the Vikings out, let us know. They went into the Cleveland game with the NFL's 17th-ranked offense and 25th-best defense. And yet there are some things they do exceedingly well. They have blocked 45 kicks in the last five years, and they beat New Orleans on Nov. 30 by blocking a 25-yard field goal at the end. They have lost only three fumbles this season. That's right, three. And finally this one—for 14 straight years they have lost their final game of the season. But at least they'll be playing in January.

Let's face it. Even in the NFC Central, someone's got to be No. 1.

END

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The Great American Beer Switch

LIVE on AFC Playoffs

See Schlitz tackle top beers in TV taste test—just before second half kickoff

The most famous player implicated in the Chicago Black Sox scandal was Shoeless Joe Jackson—a star many considered the equal of Cobb and Ruth. Now, new testimony of Jackson's innocence and proof of his neglected greatness highlight a splendid sports biography.

"Diamond fans will love this account... Gropman builds a strong case to prove Jackson's innocence."—*Publishers Weekly*

Say It Ain't So, Joe!

The Story of Shoeless Joe Jackson

Donald Gropman

\$9.95 Illustrated Little, Brown

Sportsmen of the Year

A Reminder of What We Can Be

At a time when international tensions and domestic frustrations had dampened traditional American optimism, the underdog U.S. Olympic hockey team gave the entire nation a lift by defeating the world's top team, the Soviets, and ultimately winning the gold medal. Those youngsters did so by means of the old-fashioned American work ethic, which some people feared was disappearing from the land

by E.M. Swift

The impact was the thing. One morning they were 19 fuzzy-cheeked college kids and a tall guy with a beard, and the next... WE BEAT THE RUSSIANS! In Babbitt, Minn., hometown of Forward Buzsae Schneider, guys went into their backyards and began firing shotguns toward the heavens. Kaboom! Kaboom! WE BEAT THE RUSSIANS! In Santa Monica a photographer heard the outcome of the game and went into his local grocery store, a mom-and-pop operation run by an elderly immigrant couple. "Guess what," he said. "Our boys beat the Russians." The old grocer looked at him. "No kidding?" Then he started to cry. "No kidding?"

In Winthrop, Mass., 70 people gathered outside the home of Mike Eruzione, who had scored the winning goal, and croaked out the national anthem. Not God Bless America, which is what the players were singing in Lake Placid. The Star-Spangled Banner

One man was listening to the game in his car, driving through a thunderstorm, with the U.S. clinging to a 4-3 lead. He kept pounding his hands on the steering wheel in excitement. Finally he pulled off the highway and listened as the countdown started... 5... 4... 3... 2... 1... WE BEAT THE RUSSIANS! He started to honk his horn. He yelled inside his car. It felt absolutely wonderful. He got out and started to scream in the rain. There were 10 other cars pulled off to the side of the road, 10 other drivers yelling their fool heads off in the rain. They made a huddle, and then they hollered together—WE BEAT THE RUSSIANS! Perfect strangers dancing beside the highway with 18-wheelers zooming by and spraying them with grime.

We, The U.S. Olympic hockey team wasn't a bunch of weird, freaky commando types. They were our boys. Clean-cut kids from small towns, well-groomed and good-looking, who loved their folks and liked to drink a little beer. Our

continued



The shot heard 'round the world: the golden goal that beat the Russians and reinvigorated America's sports

Sportsmen continued

boys. Young men molded by a coach who wasn't afraid to preach the values of the good old Protestant work ethic, while ever prepared to stuff a hockey stick down an offending opponent's throat. And don't think that didn't matter, given the political climate at the time—the hostages, Afghanistan, the pending Olympic boycott of the Moscow Games.

But there was more to the story than the moment of victory.

The members of the 1980 U.S. Olympic hockey team weren't named Sportsmen of the Year because of the 60 minutes they played one Friday afternoon in February. The game with the Soviet Union meant nothing to the players politically. Even its impact was largely lost on them until much later, confined as they were to the Olympic Village in Lake Placid, listening to one dinky local radio station and reading no newspapers. "If people want to think that performance was for our country, that's fine," says Mark Pavelich, the small, quiet forward who set up Eruzione's winning goal. "But the truth of the matter is, it was just a hockey game. There was enough to worry about without worrying about Afghanistan or winning it for the pride and glory of the United States. We wanted to win it for ourselves."

Not ourselves as in I, me, mine. Ourselves the team. Individually, they were fine, dedicated sportsmen. Some will have excellent pro hockey careers. Others will bust. But collectively, they were a transcendent lot. For seven months they pushed each other on and pulled each other along, from rung to rung, until for two weeks in February they—a bunch of unheralded amateurs—became the best hockey team in the world. The best team. The whole was greater than the sum of its parts by a mile. And they were not just a team, they were innovative and exuberant and absolutely unafraid to succeed. They were a perfect reflection of how Americans wanted to perceive themselves. By gum, it's still in us! It was certainly still in them.

So for reminding us of some things, and for briefly brightening the days of 220 million people, we doff our caps to them, *in toto* Sportsmen of the Year.

Leadership, of course, was the key. These guys didn't descend on their skates from a mountaintop preaching teamwork and brotherhood. Are you kidding? They were all-stars, *la crème de la crème*. Many had egos as big and heads the size of pumpkins. Fifteen of the 20 had been drafted by NHL clubs and considered the Games a stepping-stone to the big time. They could showcase their individual talents, prove they could handle a grueling schedule, and, thank-you-huh, where do I sign? Herb Brooks, the coach, made it the most painful stepping-stone of their lives.

"He treated us all the same," says every last member of the team. "Rotten."

Karl Malden, the actor who plays Brooks in the forthcoming ABC-TV movie on the team, *Miracle on Ice*, which will be aired in March, has never met Brooks, but he has studied him on videotape, especially his eyes. "I'd hate to meet him in a dark alley," Malden says. "I think he's a little on the neurotic side. Maybe more than a little. Any moment you think he's going to jump out of his skin."

That's one man's opinion. Malden, that hard-boned scowler who has no pity in his heart for anyone continued



JIM GRANT, goaltender, shown here in Boston's Faneuil Hall Marketplace, plays for his hometown Bruins



KEN MORROW, defenseman, skates for the New York Islanders and owns a piece of the 1980 Stanley Cup



STEVE JANASZAK, the goalie who never played in the Games, shuttles between minor league teams in Fort Wayne, Ind. and Fort Worth



BILL BAKER, defenseman, wears le rouge: brags at fans of Les Canadiens but wishes they'd play less noise



NEAL SHOTEN, forward, is a sophomore at the University of Minnesota and regularly watches tapes of the Games



MIKE RAMSEY, defenseman, plays for Buffalo. His medal is home in Minnesota because his mother's afraid if he loses it



JACK O'CALLAHAN, defenseman, is another owner leaguer in New Brunswick where nobody knows who I am

Sportsmen continued

leaving home without American Express traveler's checks, was brought to tears not once but twice by the sight of Goal-tender Jim Craig asking "Where's my father?" after the team had beaten Finland to win the gold medal, first on television, then months later on videotape. Truly, this team plucked many different heartstrings.

Brooks was as sentimental as a stone throughout. After the victory over Finland, he shook hands with two or three people behind the bench, then disappeared into the dressing room. Says Malden, "He could have smiled just once, during the game with Norway, or Romania. But he didn't. Then after working seven months for something, the moment he gets it he walks away from it. You tell me, is that a normal man?"

All right. No. But Malden is wrong about one thing. If you were to meet Brooks in a dark alley, you wouldn't be frightened. He would barely notice you. His mind would be a million miles away. You'd wonder where. He's a driven perfectionist. His wife, Patty, an attractive, bubbly woman, recalls seeing their daughter, Kelly, crawling around and straightening rugs when she was 10 months old. Patty groaned, "Oh, my God, I've got another one!" Brooks is also a brilliant motivator and, like all great coaches, an innovator. He motivates largely through fear. Schneider, who also played under Brooks for three years at the University of Minnesota, says, "He puts you on the back but always lets you know he has the knife in the other hand."

Sagittarily, the pat is on the back, the knife is front and center. Brooks isn't one to sneak around confrontation. "I gave our guys every opportunity to call me an honest son of a bitch," he says now. "Hockey players are going to call you a son of a bitch at times anyway, in emotion. But they could call me an honest one because everything was up front."

They do, and it requires very little emotion. But most—if not all—of the players realize that if Brooks had been any different, they couldn't possibly have accomplished what they did. "It was a lonely year for me," says Brooks. "Very lonely. But it was by design. I never was close to my university players because they were so young. But this team had everything I wanted to be close to, everything I admired: the talent, the psychological makeup, the personality. But I had to stay away. If I couldn't know all, I didn't want to know one, because there wasn't going to be any favoritism."

Players like Phil Verchota, who played for Brooks for four years at Minnesota and then all of last year, have still never heard so much as a "Nice day today, eh, Phil?" out of Brooks. "Say he, and you'll get hit back," Verchota says. "Not even that sometimes." The man scared the daylight out of them. Gave them the willies. He wasn't human. But he could coach, and they never questioned that for a second.

Which isn't to say they never questioned his methods. (His obsession, of course, was a given.) One of the devices Brooks used to select his final team was a psychological test of more than 300 questions that he had specially prepared. He was looking for a certain type of player, and the test was designed to show how certain people would react under stress. He thought he'd try it. There would be 68 players at the August tryout camp in Colorado Springs, and he had to cut them down to 26 in a matter of days. He would leave no stone unturned.

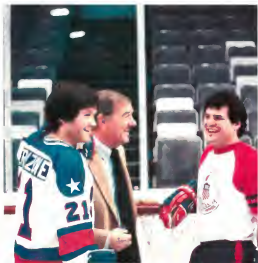
One player—an eventual Olympic hero— continued



ERIC STROHBEL, forward, broke his ankle in a minor league game in April, now hangs out at 3rd Preston & the North, a pub near the Minnesota campus



JOVIN HARRINGTON and **MARK PAVELICH**, forwards, relish the old world life in Lugano, Switzerland, where they're teammates in the Swiss league



MIKE ERUZIONE, forward (on the right), offers paid advice to Andrew Stevens and Karl Melder: the stars of the upcoming TV movie "Miracle on Ice"



DAVE CHRISTIAN, forward, plays for the Winnipeg Jets, a sorry team



PHIL VERCHOTA, forward, rejected offers from his home-state Minnesota North Stars and headed off to play in Helsinki, where there are delicacies at every bank



BOB SUTER, forward, owns a sporting-goods store in Medina, Wis. and searches out pickup hockey games



ROB McCLANAHAN, forward, drives between Buffalo and Rochester for major and minor league games

Sportsmen continued

said, "Herb, I'm not taking this. I don't believe in that stuff."

"Why's that?" Brooks asked.

"Oh, it's a lot of bull, psychology."

"Well, wait a minute. Here's what it might show. It's not as important as what goes on out on the ice, but it's something we can use. I don't want to miss anything."

"I don't want to take it," the player said.

Brooks nodded. "O.K. Fine. You just took it. You told me everything I wanted to know." He was steaming.

"How'd I do?"

"You flunked."

The next day the player took the test.

What kind of competitor was Brooks looking for? Big strong kids who could skate through a wall? Guys who could fly? Who could pay the price? Who could make the puck tap dance? Good Lord, spare us. Brooks wanted young, educated kids who were willing to break down stereotypes, were willing to throw old wives' tales about conditioning and tactics out the window. He wanted open-minded people who could skate. "The ignorant people, the self-centered people, the people who don't want to expand their thoughts, they're not going to be the real good athletes," Brooks says. "They're not going to be able to keep that particular moment, that game, that season in the proper perspective. I believe it. Understand this world around you."

When Brooks talks about "ignorant, self-centered people who don't want to expand their thoughts," he's describing 90% of the National Hockey League. For better or worse, most of the players trying out for the Olympic team were hoping to jump from there to the pros. So they wanted to show the NHL scouts that they could do it the NHL way—ugh, me fight, me chop, me muck. That doesn't work in international hockey, and Brooks would have none of it. The players had to learn a new style of play in seven months. In simplest terms, they had to learn what any touch-football player knows by the fifth grade—that crisscross patterns and laterals are more effective than the plunge. They had to learn not to retaliate, which is almost un-American.

All that was easy, because weaving, passing, holding onto the puck is simply a more enjoyable way to play the game. Smashing that stereotype was a cinch. But conditioning? There is no mind in the world that is open enough to enjoy the tortures of Herbies.

Herbies are a relatively common form of windsprint that all hockey players do, but only the Olympians call them by that name. End line to blue line and back, to red line and back, to far blue line and back, all the way down and back. Rest. Two or three sets of Herbies at the end of practice is about as much punishment as most coaches are willing to dish out. The day before a game, it's a rare coach indeed who'll submit his players to even one Herbie, and by the time you reach the NHL, your Herbie days are pretty much over. Hey, we're in the bigs now. We play ourselves into shape.

Bull. In the 1979 Challenge Cup the Soviets skated rings around the NHL All-Stars late in the games. The Russians can do Herbies till the cows come home. They skate as hard in the last shift of a game as they do in the first, and it has nothing to do with emotion or adrenaline. They have always been the best-conditioned hockey players in the world.

Peter Stastny, the Czechoslovakian Olympic continued

Sportsmen (continued)



STEVE CHRISTOFF, forward, is a Minnesota North Star. Last spring he scored a rookie-record eight playoff goals.



BUZZ SCHNEIDER, forward, and his wife Gail, await their first child in Bern, Switzerland, where Buzz is the local team's star.

star who defected last summer to the NHL's Quebec Nordiques, says the one thing that most shocked the international hockey community about the performance of the young Americans (average age: 22) was their conditioning. The Soviets had always been at one level, with everybody else at a level below. Suddenly here are a bunch of Americans, for heaven's sake, whom the Russians are huffing and puffing to keep up with in the third period. Who are those guys? In the seven games played in the Olympics, the U.S. team was outscored nine goals to six in the first period, but outscored its opponents 16-3 in the third. What got into them? Steroids? Herbies.

"It's a selling job," says Brooks. "When you want to push people who are living a good life in an affluent society, you have to do a selling job." The sales pitch went like this: Skate or you're off the team. You're gone. No pro contract. No big money. Gone.

In his own words, Brooks was "smart enough to know I was dumb." How do you get a hockey player in shape the way the Russians were in shape? Nobody knew, not in the hockey world. So Brooks went to coaches of track and swimming—areas in which American athletes have been trained to compete successfully on the international level—and found out about anaerobics, flexibility exercises, underloading, overloading, pulse rates, the works. Then he transferred this information to his players, who, because they were educated, because they were open-minded, were continued



MARK JOHNSON, center, skates for the Pittsburgh Penguins; certainly not a gold medal or Stanley Cup team.

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MARK WELLS, forward, is a minor-leaguer in New Haven and says he feels as if he's "starting out all over again."



DAVE ELK, forward, may be a Bostonian, but he's at home on Broadway as a regular for the New York Rangers.



HERB BROOKS, coach, has found peace if not contentment, in Davos, Switzerland; in March he'll become the coach of the Rangers.

willing to listen. Willing to give it a try. Sure, we'll run up and down that hill to the Holiday Inn after practices. Sure, we'll do another Herbie. Twenty-five minutes of sprints today without pucks? Sure, we'll do it. And for six months they hated Brooks' guts.

There was a moment of truth for this team. A moment when they became one. It was back in September of 1979 when they were playing a game in Norway. It ended in a 4-4 tie, and Brooks, to say the least, was dissatisfied. "We're going to skate some time today," he told them afterward. Then he sent them back onto the ice.

Forward Dave Silk recalls it this way: "There were 30 or 40 people still in the stands. First they thought we were putting on a skating exhibition, and they cheered. After a while they realized the coach was mad at us for not playing hard, and they booed. Then they got bored and left. Then the workers got bored, and they turned off the lights."

Doing Herbies in the dark... it's terrifying. But they did it. Schneider happened to have been thrown out of the game, and he had already changed into his street clothes. He was watching in horror as his teammates went up and back, up and back. Again and again and again. But instead of feeling relieved, he felt guilty. "Should I get my skates on, Patty?" he asked Assistant Coach Craig Patrick. "Cool it, Buzz," Patrick replied.

It ended at last, and Brooks had the players coast slowly around the rink so that the lactic acid could work itself out of their muscles. And that was when Forward Mark Johnson broke his stick over the boards. Mark Johnson, who made the team go. Mark Johnson, who was its hardest worker, its smartest player. Mark Johnson, whom Brooks never, ever had to yell at. And you know what Brooks said—screamed—after skating those kids within an inch of their lives? "If I ever see a kid hit a stick on the boards again, I'll skate you till you die!" They believed him. And they would have died, just to spite him. Says Silk, "I can remember times when I was so mad at him I tried to skate so hard I'd collapse, so I could say to him, 'See what you did?'" But they weren't an all-star team anymore. They were together in this, all for one. And Brooks was the enemy. And don't think he didn't know it. It was a lonely year by design, all right.

"He knew exactly where to quit," says John Harrington, a forward whose place on the team was never secure. "He'd push you right to the limit where you were ready to say, 'I've had it, I'm throwing it in'—and then he'd back off."

For Brooks, the trick was knowing where that limit was for every player. They may have been a team, but they were still 20 different personalities. The first time Brooks saw Silk skate at the Colorado Springs training camp, he took him aside and said, "I don't know if you can't skate or you won't skate, but I intend to find out." Silk had been an All-American at Boston University and had the reputation of playing his best in the biggest games. Brooks wanted him on the Olympic team, but he knew that Silk needed more speed. So he promised to ride him, to embarrass him, to rant and rave at him all season long. And even then, Brooks implied, he'd probably be too slow. For three months Brooks gave Silk not one single word of encouragement. Silk, you're too damn slow! Then one day in practice the team was warming up, skating around the rink, when Silk heard, "Keep at it, your

skating's getting better." He looked around and saw Brooks. "He never even looked at me," Silk says. "He kind of whispered it on the way by. It made me feel so good I wanted to skate around and holler."

When Brooks was at Minnesota, he had an unofficial rule against facial hair. He would have liked a clean-shaven Olympic team, too. Trouble was, Ken Morrow, the team's steadiest defenseman, a gentle giant who minded his own business, happened to have a beard already. He'd had one in college, and he rather liked it. And the New York Islanders rather liked Morrow. So rather than risk pushing Morrow too far, rather than risk having the little matter of a beard be the straw that sent Morrow to the big money six months ahead of his teammates, Brooks came up with a rule custom-made to keep Morrow around. Anyone who had had a beard before training camp could keep it. It was new growth that was a no-no.

Brooks treated Johnson differently, too. Johnson is a competitor, one of those rare players who find the puck on their stick all night long. He is absolutely dedicated to hockey, and was dedicated to the team—a leader by example. Yet, until September, Johnson had no idea where he stood. No one did—Brooks had an ax over everyone's head. But Brooks took Johnson aside shortly after the Skate Till You Die episode and told him, "You're the guy who's going to make or break us. When you're really playing, our whole team gets better."

"It was a real shocker," Johnson recalls. "I was just worried about making the club, and he throws a curve like that at you. What can you say? You take a big gulp and swallow it down."

Craig knew he was the man who would be in goal. He had played brilliantly in the 1979 World Cup championship tournament for Brooks, and by waiting a year to turn professional, he had been all but assured of being the starting goalie for the Olympics. But while the personalities of the rest of the team fit together like a jigsaw puzzle, Craig's cockiness and penchant for yapping kept him apart. He wore on people. For Christmas his teammates gave him a giant jawbreaker, hoping to shut him up. But what the heck, he was the goalie, and goalies are kind of ding-y anyway, right? But the psyche of a team is a fragile thing, and when Brooks saw he had a goaltender who wasn't going to fit in, he made sure that he wasn't going to start messing things up. So he told Craig to keep his trap shut about whose fault the goals were, shoulder the blame himself, and buy the beer after the game. Don't muddy the waters. It was funny; Craig and Brooks struck up a friendship during the year. They were voluntary outcasts who worked, played and thought very much as one.

There was a player on the team who had Brooks' ear—the captain, Eruzione. Brooks had wanted him to be captain practically from the start. He was a leader; he was sensitive; he was a catalyst. But the captain had to be elected by the team. So Brooks campaigned. He confided in Eruzione in front of the other players, assigned him responsibilities, showed him respect. He was even prepared to miscount the ballots, but he didn't have to. The players liked Mike, too. But even Eruzione wasn't spared Brooks' menacing knife. With three games remaining in their exhibition schedule and the first Olympic game less than continued

two weeks away. Brooks called Eruzione aside and told him he wasn't playing well. Uh-huh. Mike, you're a great captain and a great guy, but you've got to start pulling your oar. Uh-huh. Or else I'll have to tell the press you've hurt your back and are coming to Lake Placid as an assistant coach. **SAY WHAT?**

He was going to cut his own captain! After 57 games he was going to say, "Come along and be my assistant—you aren't good enough!" Well, the hell with you. And Eruzione went out and scored five goals in those last three games. Not only that, when word got out that the coach was prepared to cut the captain—holy cow, I'd better work my little behind off. And Brooks did the same thing to Craig, telling him it was too bad, but obviously he had worked him too hard,

played him in too many games, and now the goalie was fighting the puck and the only thing to do was to get Steve Janaszak, his backup, ready. . . . **SAY WHAT?** You're not giving my job away now, not now, not after six months of this crud. . . . But you're fighting the puck, Jimmy. . . . I'll fight you, you cur. . . . I'll show you who's ready and who's not.

So they went to Lake Placid united as ever against their coach. They would show him! Twenty players, the ones who had survived all the cuts, still hungry to prove themselves. Six who had traveled with the team all year were dropped just before Lake Placid. The last forward to go was a young man named Ralph Cox. Brooks himself had been the last forward cut from the gold-medal-winning 1960 U.S. hockey team, and the one time all year that his callous *continued*

AFTER-DINNER SPEAKERS AND DESIGNATED MOP-UPS

How can I lose my perspective when my mother still insists on waiting up for me?" asks Mike Eruzione, whose winning goal against the Russians made him famous overnight. If the U.S. team hadn't won the gold medal, Eruzione probably would have taken a job with his alma mater, Boston University, as assistant hockey coach. Instead he is jetting to Los Angeles, Colorado Springs and New York, dividing his time between being technical adviser in the making of the *Miracle On Ice* film and serving as a color commentator for the USA cable television network. His face is on the cover of the telephone book in his hometown of Winthrop, Mass.; he's had two proposals of marriage ("I didn't have any last year,") and he threw out the first ball on opening day for both the Red Sox and Yankees—surely a first. On the banquet circuit he's made dozens of appearances around the U.S. He opens each one with a 20-minute highlight film, which includes the winning goal and the sequence of Eruzione singing the national anthem as Old Glory was raised during the medal ceremony. The film closes with about 8,000 visuals playing *The Impossible Dream*. By the time he actually has to say something, there isn't a dry eye in the house. "I stand there and tell them all to go home, and they do it. They just want to share in the moment."

Herb Brooks, too, hit the banquet circuit, at one point making 60 appearances in 90 days (for up to \$5,000 per). Now he's coaching in Davos, Switzerland, but making plans to join the New York Rangers as coach in March. Hockey in Switzerland isn't what Brooks had expected. The Davos players hold regular 9-a.m. jobs, and they wouldn't stand for the conditioning program Brooks had planned. Further, they didn't like his weaving, puck-control system. They told him they weren't trying to beat the Russians, and could

they please go back to the old way? Brooks agreed. "I'm tired of browbeating guys," he says. "If they don't want to play, there's nothing I'm going to do about it. But I don't ever want to forget Lake Placid, even if you can't just hang your hat on it. The barstools are full of guys living in the past."

Jim Craig now plays for the Boston Bruins. He resides a few minutes away from the house in which he grew up. He, too, has made a lot of personal appearances, and he got \$35,000 for doing one commercial for Coca-Cola.

Craig is disillusioned—with the attitude of his teammates, the NHL game, fame, even affluence. "I've always wanted to make money, but since I've had it, I haven't felt any better," he says. "You can't meet anybody without being suspicious. Do they want to meet me, or Jim Craig the goalie, the Olympic hero? I've isolated myself. I'm going into a shell, and I'd like to break out of it." He can't go back to his old Boston University stomping ground, The Dugout. He doesn't feel comfortable going anywhere, so he stays in his apartment alone. His Bruin teammates, a veteran lot, haven't accepted him with open arms, and his status was hardly improved when he took it upon himself to diagram the Olympic team's power play for the Bruins.

"What am I?" he asks. "I'm not an Olympic goalie anymore. I'm not an NHL goalie yet. I'm a rookie. But I'm not treated like a rookie. What I'm trying to do is find myself. When I do that, then I'll be happy. It's like I've gone from a baby to adulthood. Where the hell's my childhood? I wish I could wake up one morning and not have the pressure squeezing in on me. It's been like that since the Olympics."

Very few of the others on the team have transformed medals into money. "I'm son of jaded about the whole thing because it hasn't come out fairly," says Dave Silk, who for a

while last year, while playing for the New Haven Night Hawks, was making free appearances at supermarkets around town, despite having the same agent as Eruzione and Craig. Jack O'Callahan, another Bostonian, refers to himself as "designated mop-up for Craig and Eruzione," having been invited to appear only when they couldn't. Others, like Mark Johnson, simply avoided the glare by design. He didn't acquire a talent agent, saying, "I didn't think I should change my life because of those two weeks. The time commitment was too much. Flying here and there. I'd rather play golf with my buddies."

Aside from Eruzione, the Olympians having the most fun are the ones now playing in Europe. John Harrington certainly enjoys hockey in Lugano, Switzerland, more than he did hockey in the minors in Rochester, N.Y., last spring. In his first Rochester game there was a belch-clearing brawl, in the second he took a stick to the chin good for seven stitches, and in the third a vicious cross-check left him with a concussion and his four front teeth wired together for eight weeks. Mark Pavelich, Harrington's teammate in Lugano, went to Europe for a more tender reason. In Lake Placid the waitress who served the U.S. team at the Holiday Inn was Isabelle Houdor. She is from St. Moritz, a two-hour drive from Lugano. Pavelich knows the road.

The one person who is willing to admit unequivocally that the Olympics not only changed his life, it changed him, is the goalie who never played, Steve Janaszak, now a Colorado Rockies farmhand who regularly commutes between teams in Fort Worth, Texas and Fort Wayne, Ind. One night in the Olympic Village he met Jackie Mitchell, a Long Island girl who was working there as an interpreter. They are now engaged. "I'd never have believed I'd get something so terrific out of hockey," Janaszak says.



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VOLKSWAGEN DOES IT AGAIN



front came down was when he cut Cox. "He was such a gentleman that I cried on it," says Brooks. "I had a little flashback of myself at the time. And you know what he told me? True story. He said, 'That's all right, coach. I understand. You guys are going to win the gold medal.' Ralph Cox said that. And when we won it, that's who I thought of. Ralph Cox."

At the time, though, Brooks was thinking, "What have you been smoking, Coxy?" The U.S. team was seeded No. 7 in the eight-team field and had the toughest draw in the tournament, facing Sweden and Czechoslovakia—the second and third seeds—in the first two games. Further, in the final exhibition game, the Soviets—almost exactly the same team that had whipped the NHL All-Stars a year earlier—had routed the U.S. 10–3. Welcome to the big time. Yanks. The Americans were hoping for a bronze.

They hoped to get two points in those first two games, one win or two ties. If they didn't, they could pack it in, because there'd be no chance for a medal. The scouting report on Sweden said that technically the Swedes were as good as any team in the world at skating, passing and shooting, but in tough games their spirit could be broken. But you couldn't let them get a lead on you. Stay close.

In the first period the young, nervous U.S. team stayed close. The Swedes led 1–0, and they had outshot the Americans 16–7, but Craig had kept the U.S. hopes alive with outstanding work in goal. And the Americans had some chances of their own—both Rob McClanahan and Eric Strobeil missed breakaways in the first four minutes. So now it was behind them, those first-period jitters.

But in the dressing room Brooks was furious. Insane. McClanahan had suffered a severe charley horse—McClanahan, who played on the first line with Johnson, who was left wing on the power play, who could fly—and one of the trainers told him to get his equipment off and put ice on the bruise, that's all for tonight. A trainer, for heaven's sake. And McClanahan did it. He was sitting in there in his underwear, an ice pack on his thigh, and the door flew open and there came Brooks, and was he mad! "You gutless son of a bitch! Nobody's going belly-up now!"

"Instead of coming in and yelling at us as a team, he picked on Robbie," Johnson recalls. "It was the craziest locker room I've ever been in. He's swearing. Everyone else is swearing. Robbie's swearing and crying. Then Robbie follows him out into the hall and is screaming at him, 'I'll show you!' And in a minute here's the door flying open again and Herbie's coming back yelling, 'It's about time you grew up, you baby. . . .'"

At that point Johnson yelled at ErUZIONE to get Brooks out of there. Can you best that? *The star player was yelling at the captain to get the coach out of the locker room.* Finally, Jack O'Callahan, a defenseman who wasn't dressed for the game because of an injury, grabbed Brooks from behind; Brooks and McClanahan were jawbone to jawbone and O'Callahan was afraid they'd start swinging. Meanwhile, the rest of the team was sitting there thinking, "We're one period into the Olympics, down one lousy goal, and the coach loses his marbles."

But had he? McClanahan put his stuff back on, and the U.S. team went onto the ice, outshot the Swedes in the sec-

ond period and tied the game 1–1. McClanahan couldn't even sit down between shifts; his leg was too sore to bend. He'd stand there at the end of the bench, as far away from Brooks as he could get, then hop out when it came time to play. *I'll show you!* And he finished the tournament with five goals, tying Johnson and Schneider for tops on the team. Sweden scored early in the third period to take a 2–1 lead, but in the final minute the U.S. pulled Craig from the net and Bill Baker boomed home the tying goal off a centering pass from Mark Pavelich with 27 seconds left. The U.S. had pulled out one of the two points it needed and, what's more, everybody got to know each other a little better. "It was mayhem in here," Schneider said afterward. "But that's what's going to win it for us, emotion and talent put together."

Said Brooks, "Maybe I've been a little too nice to some of these guys." Honestly.

The fanfare didn't really start to build until after the U.S. beat Czechoslovakia 7–3 two nights later. That was the game in which, with little time remaining and the game well in hand, Johnson was injured by a dirty check (no pun) and on TV the nation heard the wrath of Herb Brooks firsthand. His proposal to wed a Koho hockey stick with a certain Czechoslovakian gullet produced 500 irate letters, but it also piqued the curiosity of the non-hockey-minded public. Hey, this guy's all right! And those players. They're so young. Let's keep an eye on these guys—but what's the catch?

Norway. . . Romania. . . West Germany, down they went, each game a struggle in the early going, pulled out in the third period when those nameless kids who looked about 15 simply blew the opposition away. And afterward the players would line up at center ice and smile those great big wonderful smiles, many of which actually displayed teeth, and salute the fans. They'd hoist their sticks to the fans on one side of the rink; then they'd turn around and hoist them to the other side. It was a terrific routine.

One of the reasons they still were nameless was that Brooks had forbidden them to attend the post-game press conferences, enraging both the U.S. Olympic Committee brass and the players' agents. The players themselves were none too keen on the idea, either, though they understood the reasoning. This team wasn't built around stars, and the press conferences were set up to handle only three players. You couldn't have three players getting all the publicity and not believing they were the stars. So no players attended them. Only Brooks. Then when the press accused Brooks of hogging the limelight, he refused to attend anymore and sent Craig Patrick in his place. Now everyone was mad at him. But without the pressure of the spotlight, the team stayed just as loosey-goosey as a colt on a romp. Hey, this was fun! But the Russians were coming.

The day before the U.S.-Soviet game, Brooks held a meeting after practice and told his players that the Russians were ripe; they were lethargic changing lines, their passes had lost their crispness. All season long he had told them that Boris Mikhailov, 13 years the Soviet captain, looked like Stan Laurel. You can't skate against Stan Laurel! The players would roll their eyes: *Here goes Herbie. . . .* But now. continued

24 hours before the game, they could see it. The Russians were ripe. The timing was right. Forget that 10-3 pre-Olympic defeat. That was a lifetime ago. It was, too.

"The Russians were ready to cut their own throats," says Brooks. "But we had to get to the point to be ready to pick up the knife and hand it to them. So the morning of the game I called the team together and told them, 'It's meant to be. This is your moment and it's going to happen.' It's kind of corny and I could see them thinking, 'Here goes Herb again...' But I believed it."

The idea was to stay close. "It was in the backs of our minds that we might win," recalls Schneider, "but nobody would say it. They'd think you were off your rocker." Craig made some big saves early, but the Russians scored first. Five minutes later Schneider tied it on a 50-foot shot from the left boards. The Soviets took the lead again, but with one second left in the first period Johnson scored to make it 2-2. That was a big goal. When the Russians came out for the second period, Vladislav Tretak no longer was in goal; he'd been yanked. Vladimir Myshkin was in the nets, the same Myshkin who had shut out the NHL All-Stars in the '79 Challenge Cup. The Soviets got the only goal of the second period and outshot the Americans 12-2.

Brooks told his players to divide the third period into four five-minute segments. They didn't have to tie the game in the first segment, or even the second. There was lots of time. Stay with them. Make them skate. The first five minutes of the third period were scoreless. Then at 8:39 Mark Johnson tied the game 3-3 on a power play. Bedlam. Go, clock, go! "I remember thinking we might actually have a chance to tie," says Pavelich. But the U.S. team had barely had a chance to think of that improbability when Erzuzone scored what Harrington calls "one of the great slop goals of all time." The puck was behind the Soviet net and Harrington and a Soviet defenseman were battling for it. Somehow the puck squirted along the boards to Pavelich, who hammered at it and was promptly smashed face-first into the glass. He never saw the end result. The puck caromed off the boards and slid into the slot, directly to Erzuzone, whom Pavelich hadn't seen. Erzuzone snapped a wrist shot past Myshkin. There were exactly 10 minutes to go. U.S. 4, U.S.S.R. 3.

That's how it ended. No one remembers much about those final 10 minutes except that they took forever. No one breathed. The shifts were insanely short because, by the players' admission, no one wanted to be on the ice when the Great Red Bear awoke and there was hell to pay. Craig, who had been tying up the puck at every opportunity during the tournament, slowing down the play, now wouldn't touch it. I don't want it, man, you take it! He was afraid, and rightly so, that if his teammates lined up for a face-off in their own zone and had time to think about the absurdity of leading the Russians, had time to peer up at the clock and brood about the time remaining, their knees would turn to goo.

But they never panicked. Shoot, this was a ball compared with doing Herbie in the dark. Indeed, if anyone panicked it was the Russians, who started to throw in the puck and chase it—NHL hockey, by gosh—who misfired shots, and who, at

the end, never pulled their goalie, never gave it that last desperate try that the U.S. had made work against Sweden.

And then it was over. The horn sounded and there was that unforgettable scene of triumph, the rolling and hugging and flinging of sticks. The flags. My God, what a sight. There was the shaking of hands, the staggered, reluctant exit from the ice. But it wasn't until the U.S. players were back in the locker room that the enormity of what they had done hit them. "It was absolutely quiet," recalls Janaszak. "Some guys were crying a little. You got the impression that the game wasn't over, because no one is ever up a goal on the Russians when a game is over. No one believed it."

It was then that somebody started a chorus of *God Bless America*. 20 sweaty guys in hockey uniforms chanting, "... from the mountains, to the valleys, na-na-na-na-na, na-na-na-na..." Nobody knew the words. And where was Brooks? Holed up in the men's room, afraid to come out and ruin their celebration. "I almost started to cry," he says. "It was probably the most emotional moment I'd ever seen. Finally I snuck out into the hall, and the state troopers were all standing there crying. Now where do you go?"

Of course, the tournament wasn't over yet. If the U.S. had lost to the Finns on Sunday, it would have finished in fourth place. No medal. Brooks came into the locker room Saturday, took one look at guys signing sticks and pictures, and began throwing things around and telling them, "You aren't good enough for all this attention! You're too damn young! You don't have the talent!" So the eyes rolled and the lips buttoned—but they listened, because what he was saying was obvious to all of them by now. They had come too far to blow it. And on Sunday they won the gold medal by beating an excellent Finnish team 4-2, but they needed three goals in the third period to do it. Really, they weren't even worried. They knew they would do it, because if you can outscore the Russians in the third period, two goals to none, you can sure as heck outscore the Finns. They believed absolutely in themselves. And Verchota, McClanahan and Johnson went out and scored—bing, bing, bang.

They counted down the seconds, slapping their sticks on the boards, screaming to each other, to the refs, to the crowd. Again pandemonium, slightly less frenzied than two days before, the handshakes and the gradual retreat from the scene of their triumph. And then a bit of irony. The cameras captured the goalie, Craig, searching the crowd for his father. It brought tears; it made him a hero in the eyes of the country. But, in truth, he was searching for someone to share this moment with. Like Brooks, he was separate, apart from this team. He had no close friendships, and now he needed one.

The final, uplifting moment they gave us was at the gold-medal ceremony, when Erzuzone called his teammates up on the platform with him. After that they marched around the rink as if they owned the place, singing and carrying on. They were definitely not cooling it; they were happy young men. And they did own the place. They owned the whole country for a while. It just made you want to pick up your television set and take it to bed with you. It really made you feel good.

It is over now. Unlike other clubs, Olympic teams self-destruct into 20 different directions and careers afterward—at least in this country. There is never a next year for them. They write their story once. Sportsmen of the Year. **320**



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If Georgia is to defeat Notre Dame in the Sugar Bowl and win its first national title, Buck Belue must do more than hand the ball to Herschel

by DOUGLAS S. LOONEY

As Buck Belue, quarterback of No. 1-ranked Georgia, approaches a car-rental booth at the Valdosta, Ga. airport, the woman behind the counter lights up. "Do you know how proud Valdosta is of you?" she says.

"Yeah," says Belue, "but tell me again anyhow." And then the all-American boy from Valdosta flashes his all-American grin. The Grin. It's The Grin that stirs the coeds who frequent The Mad Hatter bar to scribble saucy messages on the ladies' room walls, saying what they'd do to Belue, were they lucky enough to get their hands on him. And it's The Grin that has an anonymous group of girls at the University of Georgia—they call themselves the Buck-ettes—writing dog-gone! to Buck in the classified section of the school paper:

*Dear Buck:
Most Bulldogs are red
But these three are blue
'Cause we are alone in our beds
And you had better be, too!
We love You,
The Buck-ettes*

"I might be glad I don't know who they are," Belue says. And he switches on The Grin, which is Buck Belue. He will be a key figure—perhaps the key figure—when the Bulldogs play Notre Dame in the Sugar Bowl, in their quest for a national championship, and rarely

continued



THE BUCK PASSES HERE



Huddling with a trio of All-Americans, Buck backs in the sun and the role of a Georgia football hero

BUCK BELUE *continued*

does a player ascend to such heights while seeming to rely more on style than substance. For style, give Belue an A-plus. For substance and ability as a football player, give him a C-plus, which at least shows improvement over the previous two years. Consider:

- He doesn't have a great arm. "I'm not one of the most powerful passers around," says Belue. Indeed, he didn't

even throw enough to qualify for the NCAA passing rankings. No matter, he wouldn't have been high among the leaders, anyhow; for example, during the regular season he completed 77 of 156 throws for 49.4%—the seventh-best percentage in the SEC.

- He doesn't have great speed or running ability. Belue rushed for 63 yards in 95 carries (including sacks). "My forte is not my powerful running ability," he says.

- He's not big (6'1", 185 pounds) or physical. "I'd rather he was 6'3", 215 and a lot stronger, but he's not built that way," says his coach, Vince Dooley.

- He calls only the plays sent in from the bench, no audibles. "Unless audibles are done well," says Dooley, "they hurt as much as they help."

Belue's high school coach, Nick Hyder, patiently listens to this list of the quarterback's shortcomings, then smiles benignly and says, "That's real good and you're right, but you forgot to look inside and check Buck's heart." Gil Brandt, player personnel director of the Dallas Cowboys, says, "He's one of those guys who don't do much—except get the ball in the end zone."

Georgia's Offensive Coordinator, George Haffner, adds, "He's not comparable to the guys the pros are drooling over. But he's best at the intan-

gibles, and he knows what's needed. Buck has been playing for winning teams on Friday nights and Saturday afternoons most of his life."

No arm. No legs. Only The Ginn and a big heart. Small wonder the Irish—like the female clientele at The Mad Hatter—can hardly wait to get their hands, not to mention their helmets and shoulder pads, on Belue. If he doesn't keep Notre Dame off balance with his passing, the rugged Irish defense could stop Georgia's freshman running back, Herschel Walker, glorious though he is. And if that happens, you can color Georgia's No. 1 hopes very blue, too.

"I've got to be good," says Belue. "or they just might beat the view out of us." They just might. Indeed, some football people were chewing the fat in Birmingham before the recent Notre Dame-Alabama game, and their consensus was that there wasn't a team in the Top 10 that Georgia could beat. That, of course, is the snide view. It doesn't put much stock in the fact that the 11-0 Bulldogs were the only major undefeated team in the land this year and they didn't get there by mailing in their scores. Yet, there's suspicion that, although the Dogs won the SEC, they just aren't that good—they were fourth in the conference in both offense and defense. And there are those who argue that without an extraordinary amount of luck, Georgia would be 7-4. On top of that, one staunch Bulldog fan says, "Honestly, their quarterback's not that phenomenal." That fan is Belue's father, Ben.

Overshadowed by Walker, Belue has been operating in general, but not total, oblivion.

*Roses are red
Violets are blue
The hell with Herschel Walker
We love Buck Belue
The Buck-ettes*

Being unnoticed much of the time may have been a blessing. In Georgia's opener against Tennessee, for example, Belue fumbled three snaps and was tackled for a safety. The Dogs barely escaped, 16-15, when the Volunteers fumbled on the Georgia two late in the game and at least a field goal seemed imminent. "For us to go, Buck has to go."

Belue, here with high school coach Brooks, was a good enough outfielder to be drafted by the pros



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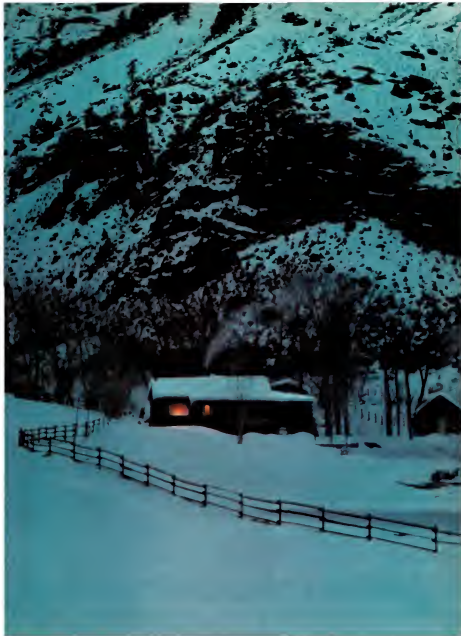
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says Dooley. "Buck didn't exactly go in the first game." In a 20-16 win over Clemson, Belue didn't exactly go again, completing two of seven passes for 31 yards. Georgia's offense was generated by the defense, namely Cornerback Scott Woerner, whose long punt return and interception scored one touchdown and set up another.

Still, as the season rolled along and Walker kept getting all the attention, Belue was steadily improving. He erupted for 228 passing yards against Kentucky; he threw a miracle pass to Lindsay Scott from deep in Georgia territory for the touchdown that beat Florida with :59 left to play; he annihilated Auburn with a lights-out, 176-total-yards performance.

All of which is more like it for a guy called Buck Belue. If ever there was a swashbuckling name, this is it. It belongs in bright lights and big letters. Belue should be riding off into the sunset with the girl at his side and the credits rolling down his back. *Men give him no lip. And, appropriately, he is a cocky player in the Roger Staubach mold, and with some justification: in games Belue has started, the Dogs are 16-2. Bumper stickers in Athens read: ME AND YOL AND A DOG NAMED BELUE. In sum, Belue can't do anything except win.*

His father planned it that way. Benjamin Franklin Belue Jr. peered into the crib of Benjamin Franklin Belue III and decreed, "We'll call him Buck. That sounds athletic." For his first birthday, Buck got a rubber bat and ball. By age five, he wasn't just playing catch with his father—he was running pass routes in the backyard. In midget football he was forced to be an end because of a rule that said if a boy weighed more than 100 pounds, he couldn't play in the backfield. Thus, Buck's coach devised an end-around pass; Belue led the league in passing.

Growing up in Valdosta was an advantage, too, because there are few towns in America that take football as seriously as Valdosta does. "Everybody cared so much about football that it made me care," says Belue. How much do they care? A recent coach for Valdosta High went 17-3 over two years and was fired because of his poor record.

Buck attended spring practice the year before he entered high school. In the span of three days, the starting quarterback

hurt his knee, the backup broke his ankle and the third-teamer got so frightened when he saw what was happening that he quit. "So there I was, the new coach with a 142-pound eighth-grader named Buck Belue as my quarterback," says Hyder. "See, it wasn't as if I had a choice." The older kids repeatedly teed off on Buck. At practice one day blood was running from his nose, he had cuts under his eyes, and his jersey was ripped to shreds. Hyder said, "Buck, I have to take you out."

"Coach, you can't do that," said Buck. "Why not?"

"Because you don't have nobody else."

In his four high school seasons Buck never missed a practice. That includes showing up at 6 a.m. on winter mornings for conditioning because, as Hyder says, "Our philosophy is that we work while our opponents sleep. He has always been the kind of guy that if everyone else is going 90 miles an hour, he'll go 91 and win. All he is a bantler." In Buck's first year as quarterback the Valdosta Wildcats were 3-7. In the next three their record was 31-6; they finished No. 2 in the state in Buck's senior season. No wonder Buck eyed his old high school field the other day and shook his head. "It was a lot bigger when I played on it," he said.

Soon football recruiters from most of the big colleges were hanging around Valdosta, but Georgia won out because Dooley agreed that Belue could also play baseball. Indeed, baseball very likely is Belue's first love. An outfielder, he was drafted by the Chicago White Sox in the second round in 1978, but their pality offer of \$22,000—reluctantly increased to \$30,000—didn't turn Buck's head. He led Georgia in hitting as a freshman, with a .373 average and a record 13 homers. But in the 1980 season Belue, who was coming off a slightly fractured left fibula suffered late in the 1979 football season, tried to split his time between spring practice and baseball. He hit .274, poorest on the team. In 1981 Belue won't play spring football, on the eminently logical grounds that "spring is for baseball and fall is for football." He even says that a big dollar offer from baseball might entice him to forgo his last year of college football. That already has the Georgia faithful wringing their hands.

Belue has come a long way since 1978 "when I didn't know if I could play football on the college level or not. But after a couple days, I found out I could. Then I was sure disappointed to be on the bench. Heck, all those recruiters kept telling me how great I was. Now I re-

continued



The Belue crew gathers for a family picnic in the backyard. Guy, Sandra, Ben, Buck, Beth and Blake



One aspect of Belue's job is simple: over to you, Herschel!

BUCK BELUE continued

alize that what they said wasn't true."

Late in Belue's freshman season, Georgia fell behind Georgia Tech 0-20 and Dooley called on Belue. "I couldn't believe they were doing that to my child," recalls Buck's mother, Sandra. At which time Belue went crazy and led the Dogs to a 29-28 victory, the greatest comeback in school history. A legend was born. Yet, that performance became a burden for Belue, too, because it established what he could do. However, because the Georgia coaches still looked upon him as the No. 2 quarterback, he often found himself on the bench. He was so distressed after getting minimal playing time in the 1978 Bluebonnet Bowl that he nearly quit the team. "I wasn't a real happy person," he says.

When the 1979 season began, things got worse. Belue shared playing time with Jeff Pyburn. "I was playing them both, neither was playing very well, and we were losing," says Dooley. Indeed,

Dooley's irrepressible wife, Barbara, who considers Buck "the cutest thing ever to hit this campus," says that when her husband would toss and turn at night over who should play quarterback, she would whisper in his ear, "Buck Belue, Buck Belue, Buck Belue." As the year progressed, Belue emerged as the starter, but then came the broken fibula. Little was made of the injury outside Athens. "When you're quarterback of a 6-5 team and throw 11 interceptions, you're not much of a celebrity," says Belue.

Asked if he had any concern about Belue as his quarterback before this season began, Dooley says, "Not at all." Barbara, however, laughs and says, "Vince was in a nervous panic over Buck." Who do you believe?

As a leader, Belue is flat out terrific, the rare kind of quarterback who is one of the boys and can still inspire his blockers. His high school baseball coach, Butch Brooks, says, "He just looks at you, doesn't say anything, but you think,

'By George, I better straighten up.' " Belue is no classroom star, but he had the good sense to travel twice to Wrightsville to help recruit Walker. Why? "We wanted him," Belue says. "More important, we needed him." Walker says, "Buck's real smart."

The non-celebrity at 6-5 is hounded for autographs at 11-0. Belue is enormously courteous about signing them, because as an inveterate autograph collector himself he knows the sting of a snub. Rick Barry's unwillingness to present young Buck with a signature is still remembered unforgivingly. Tempted to slip out the back door after a poor effort in last month's regular-season finale against Georgia Tech—8 for 16, but three interceptions—Belue realized that wasn't right and walked out the main door into the waiting throngs.

Nobody works a crowd better than Belue. He howlies everyone. Along the streets of Valdosta, he greets a man warmly and then, out of earshot, says, "That guy is the worst umpire in Val-

dosta. He struck me out a couple of times. People like that stick out in your mind."

In a restaurant he stops to buy peppermint candy—3¢ each. The money is used to help support a baseball team Belue played for, the Valdosta Red Sox. He takes three peppermints and leaves a nickel. A goody-goody companion points out the cash shortfall, and Belue says, "Those peppermints are overpriced. Besides, read the sign. It says, 'Your donation is appreciated.' It doesn't say you have to give anything." Quarterbacks are so doggone smart.

And Belue is lucky. Driving down a highway at 80—no cops come, passing on a hill—no cars come. Speeding past a sign indicating the shortest route to Plains, the billboard on which the farmers of south Georgia apologize for sending Jimmy Carter to the White House, and a billboard advertising a restaurant that has a 29-item salad bar, he reflects, "I do have a lot of confidence in myself. If we lose I get the blame, and if we win I get the glory. Quarterback isn't one of those positions that's real stable. I'm not going to tell you how good I am. I'll just play and let you form the opinions. I love to throw but I know there are better throwers. Still, I've got a pretty good arm. The difference this year is that when I drop back I know what to do. If the pass isn't there, I know not to throw. I'm not a great runner but I am mobile. What I love about football is the challenge of winning. It's a game that's not worth playing unless you win because it's so hard. I'm not saying we're one of the greatest teams that ever played. I just say we play hard and we mix that with some talent and good things happen."

John Kasay, an assistant offensive coach for the Bulldogs, says, "We can't compare to Notre Dame—on paper. You wouldn't bet on Georgia—statistically. The only thing we have is persistence." Another assistant, Rusty Russell, says, "The best thing you can say about these guys is they haven't got beat." Mostly because they're opportunistic. They lead the nation in turnover margin: they've got the ball 44 times on interceptions or opposition fumbles and turned it over themselves only 21 times.

Meanwhile, more Georgia pines and red clay are blurring past Belue's car. "You know, the main thing is to be happy," he says. "And I'm happy." And then Buck Belue flashes The Grin. **END**

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A team that buries the opposition

Paul Quinn, an NAIA school in Waco, Texas, has a mortician-coach, Wesley Boyd, who knows caskets inside and out and players who just dig putting teams away

The copper casket is wheeled onto the court through a somber honor guard, while a throbbing organ plays *I Need Thee Every Hour*. "Mercy!" a voice cries out. Mercy, indeed. When the cheerleaders start pounding their palms on the lid, swaying to a sudden infusion of soul saxophones with a disco beat, the casket almost falls off its dolly.

"I had nothing to do with it," Wesley Boyd tells the fans behind the scorer's table. "I didn't have nothing to do with it." Then he bends over and cackles, showing all his teeth.

Although he is telling the truth—the Paul Quinn College athletic director

made the arrangements—nobody believes him. After all, Coach Boyd, who is in his third year at the school, is a licensed mortician, operating funeral parlors in his hometown, Houston, and in Waco, not far from the Paul Quinn campus. He's known as "Undertaker" Boyd—Taker, for short—and indeed his Tigers usually bury their small-college opponents. Last year this band of happy pallbearers led the NAIA in scoring with a 100.9 average, finished 32-10, and represented District 8 in the national tournament. At the end of last week the little (enrollment: 400) black school across the Brazos River from big

Baylor University had an 8-1 record.

The Paul Quinn record is much more impressive than the Paul Quinn roster. Fifteen of the players are from Houston, most of them juniors, and they all seem to come from the factory at 6' 5" and 180 pounds. "People ask, 'Who's your center?'" Boyd says. "We ain't got one. 'What about your forwards?' They're all forwards. 'What about your guards?' They're all guards."

Lacking a center, a genuine ball-handling guard and a power forward, Boyd has adopted a style of play that exploits his players' quickness and jumping ability. A swarming zone press has defenders guessing, gambling, leaping and lunging all over the backcourt, smothering passes, flicking errant dribbles, and generally making basketball look like a game of hot potato played with a live grenade.

continued

Most every steal results in a basket-raiding dunk off the fast break. "If we ever get real hot," warns Leonard VanDuren (standing, second from right in picture on page 59), "we might score 180 points." Their high is 159 points last year.

Unfortunately, when the Paul Quinn press fails to steal the ball, it exposes one of the leastest half-court defenses in the country. The Paul Quinn zone can't contend with tall teams that work the baseline, and although his players are great leapers, Boyd bemoans their tendency on defense to rest arms overruled from shooting. Big leads melt away as fast as they grow. Ashes to ashes and dust to dust. "They don't have the killer instinct yet," Boyd says. "They jump on you, let you back up and then jump on you again."

Boyd's most intriguing jumper is All-Interregional Conference Forward Lorenz (Frog) Scott (standing, second from left), who is the closest thing basketball has to a designated shooter. As the ball is pushed upcourt, he goes to a spot near either corner, plants his left foot and imploringly looks for the ball. Once he has it, he launches himself into the air and fires at the basket, falling to the floor and slapping out of bounds on the seat of his pants. When he's hot, he's unstoppable; against Arkansas Baptist College on Nov. 15, he sank a 17-footer with his left leg pointed straight at the ceiling. But when he's cold, he becomes a zombie, drifting around the court with a forlorn look and heavy arms. "Who you jiving?" Boyd scolded in an early game, benching Scott for about 10 seconds. "Come on, Frog, stop putting." As Scott trudged back on the court, Boyd turned to his bench. "I can't let him alone," he said. "I want to leave him alone, but I can't." He stared down the bench. "Should I leave him alone?" Several players nodded. Boyd shrugged and sat down. A minute later, Scott had buried two improbable long shots, taken a charge, stolen two passes, and was bouncing up and down the court like a kid on Christmas morning.

"I don't think boys have to be dogged to perform," Boyd says. Of course, drill-sergeant tactics are pointless at Paul Quinn; P.Q.'s players give him gifts on Father's Day, and his prize possession is a trophy engraved FROM YOUR SONS.

The roots of Paul Quinn's familial feeling go deeper than a couple of years of college coaching. Most of Boyd's team played for or against him in Houston's ju-

nior high schools, and even Athletic Director Joe Fonteneaux pitched for him in Pony League baseball, jouncing around with Boyd in an old pickup with holes in the bottom.

"I'm from a funeral-home family," Boyd says, pondering his lapses from funeral dignity. "But I didn't want to be another mortician." Instead, he came out of the Army to teach sixth grade in Houston, putting his P.E. classes against other sixth-grade teams. But he couldn't avoid moonlighting as a mortician. "When you're making \$3,204 as a teacher and coach," he says, "you need the money."

Boyd went to Paul Quinn at age 46, after six successful seasons at Key Junior High in Houston. Of course, he wasn't exactly replacing John Wooden at UCLA. The basketball team had gone 4-26 the previous season. "We were the floor mat for everyone to walk on," Boyd says. "We were the breather on the schedule for teams both white and black."

Recruiting for a losing program is difficult at the richest schools; at Paul Quinn, Boyd had nothing to offer blue-chip players but dreams and a proud tradition of 106 years of educating black students. (Paul Quinn was the AME bishop who introduced the African Methodist Episcopal church west of the Mississippi.) The Paul Quinn campus, a modest cluster of buildings in a run-down Waco neighborhood, is right across the river from the lovely grounds and impressive architecture of Baylor. The contrast is sobering but not disheartening to Paul Quinn people. "I find in our students a fierce sense of pride," says Dr. William Watley, president of Paul Quinn.

Nevertheless, all-state basketball players tend to choose big-name schools with posh facilities and media visibility. So Boyd had to go after the scraps of Houston's high schools, the unrecruited... his old kids. "He held a workout at Carver High School in Houston that first summer," Fonteneaux recalls, "and when I walked into the gym, Coach had 120 kids there." Somehow, Boyd coaxed most of them into trying Paul Quinn. "Would you believe he showed up with 75 basketball players? The whole freshman class was basketball players." A three-month intramural round robin narrowed the number to around 40 and then later to 24. All the returning players lost their jobs. Many players eventually quit, but for those who stayed, conditions were primitive at best. "We had no uniforms

that first year," Boyd says. "And we traveled in my bearse and a family car." The team travels in two comfortable vans now, but Boyd reminds his players, "Every day you ain't gonna be a steak day. There's gonna be baloney days."

On the court Boyd is a showman, protesting real and imagined injustices in a voice that carries like the shriek of a teenage girl. He punctuates his tantrums by suddenly grinning broadly and hugging referees and rival coaches. "People know he's just messin' with 'em," Fonteneaux contends. "He walks the sidelines, messin' with the crowd, kissin' people, dancin'." Boyd's style is just as eccentric with his own team. When his players come to him for help after a particularly bad stretch, he responds, "Don't ask me! You got behind, I didn't!"

But he's right there when it comes to educational matters. "I've committed myself that every boy will finish school," Boyd says. "I make out their schedules, and none of the kids are in P.E. They're business majors. Next year, out of 12 ball-players, I'll get my real won-lost record. How many will graduate, 11 and one? Nine and three?"

To Boyd, practical experience is almost as important as a college degree, and several of his players work for him in Houston during the summer, picking up bodies, checking tags on toes. Lorenz Scott is one of the apprentices. "Frog is more interested in the anatomical aspect of it," Boyd says. And so it is that Waco residents may someday read the headline FROG DISSECTS MAN.

THE WEEK

(December 8-10)

by ANTHONY COTTON

WEST Fans in Portland had high hopes for a high score against Oregon State because a Lomax would be leading them. Unfortunately for them, the Lomax was cheerleader Terry, brother of the rifle-armed football quarterback, Neil. Terry dresses up as a mouse for Viking home games, which was fitting, because Portland State went down meekly to the Beavers 102-58. Leading the way for Oregon State was 6'8" freshman Charlie Sison, who went 11 for 11 from the field and scored 23 points. "They were trying to stop Steve [Johnson, the center], and Charlie was able to get into the holes," said Beaver Coach Ralph Miller.

continued



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Johnson also contributed, shooting eight for 12 from the field and scoring 19 points. Oregon State was 62.9% as a team. The record shooting continued as the Beavers hit 62.3% in a 92-57 romp over Portland.

Arizona State had to struggle to beat New Mexico 88-83 in Albuquerque. "I like big games. I definitely feel differently," said Kerry Page, explaining the Lobos' tougher-than-expected showing. "Their ranking makes you even more excited. You want to knock them off and send them home crying." Page scored 35 points on 15-for-26 shooting, but the big heartbreaker and crowd-silencer was Sun Devil Guard Byron Scott, who scored 33 points. Scott was oblivious to the noise in New Mexico's pit. "It was a great crowd," he said. "I enjoyed it. It's nice to have 17,000 people come to see you." Earlier in the week Scott held reigning Big Eight Player of the Year Rolando Blackman of Kansas State to 14 points in an 84-61 Sun Devil romp.

UCLA Guard Rod Foster got inspired for his game after Peppercorn after hearing NBC commentator Al McGuire say archival Oregon State deserved to be ranked ahead of the Bruins. "I got kind of upset about that," said Foster, who scored 12 points and added four steals in an 81-63 win. After the game, Peppercorn Coach Jim Harnack also took exception to McGuire's remark. "I think UCLA is better than Oregon State," he said. "They're a much better team. I think UCLA is 10 times better defensively than Oregon State."

Nevada-Las Vegas Coach Jerry Tarlenton was scratching his head after an 85-78 loss to Texas-El Paso. "We tried everything," he said. "We just didn't try it well enough." Brigham Young did enough good things to win its own Cougar Classic in Provo, beating North Texas State 108-92 and St. Mary's of California 95-76.

EAST In the opening game of the Atlantic Coast Conference season, Virginia's Ralph Sampson scored 30 points on 12-for-17 shooting and grabbed 17 rebounds as the Cavaliers beat Duke 91-79. The man assigned to Sampson, 6' 8" Mike Tress, was a little low after the game. "I feel responsible for that 30 points," said Tress. "I'd like to forget about it right now."

Other ACC teams fattened up on opponents outside the league. Maryland was a 109-83 winner over Fairleigh Dickinson, Clemson beat Illinois Tech 108-41, and Wake Forest won twice, 110-59 over John Carroll and 98-73 over Florida Southern.

Although Lee Rose coached at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte for three years in the shadow of North Carolina's Dean Smith, the two hadn't matched strategies in a game until last week. The Tar Heels won, 73-64, but the Bulls led for most of the first period and trailed by only two at the break, 39-37. Smith's second-half offensive adjustment set up the victory. "I told them to get the

ball inside to Sam Perkins," Smith said. "When he gets it there, he's either going to score or get fouled." He got both: 24 points, including 12 of 15 free throws.

Texas A&M won the First Unions Invitational at Charlotte, beating co-hosts UNCC and Davidson 75-64 and 76-62, respectively.

Aggie Coach Shelby Metcalf said the championship game against Davidson was "probably the best game we've played this year." Perhaps the Aggies are just getting used to life on the run. A&M will be at home for only nine of 27 games this season. "We love it—we get to play basketball and see the world at the same time," said 6' 8" Forward Vernon Smith, who scored 40 points and pulled down 23 rebounds in the tournament.

St. Joseph's, which won seven games in overtime or in the last seconds a year ago, added a pair of heart-stoppers, beating Princeton 51-50 in OT and Cornell 62-39 in the final moments. The cardiac pace slowed slightly in a 45-40 win over Jacksonville.

MIDEAST Indiana suffered its second straight loss, 68-60 to Notre Dame in South Bend, as Irish Forward Kelly Tripucka scored 16 points. "I get psyched when I see an Indiana uniform," Tripucka said. The Hoosiers recovered to win the seventh annual Indiana Classic. Their 83-47 rout of Baylor marked IU's 14th straight victory in the tourney, and Landon Turner, who scored 23 points in the final, was the seventh straight Hoosier to win the MVP award. The real excitement came in the semifinal when Coach Bobby Knight was ejected from a game in Assembly Hall for the first time in his 10-year Indiana career. With three minutes remaining in what turned out to be a 94-58 win over California, Knight drew a technical foul—his second of the game—for not replacing an injured player within the required 30 seconds. After the substitution was made, Referee Bob Burton charged his mind and said the sub had come in on time, and the technical was withdrawn. That irritated Cal Coach Dick Kuchen, who earned a technical for himself. However, before any free throws were shot, Burton again charged his mind. He ruled the substitution hadn't been made in time, so Knight had his second technical again. Knight exploded, drawing his third technical, automatic ejection and a standing ovation from the crowd. Kuchen stood pat with one T.

Iowa Coach Lute Olson switched centers before a game with Nevada-Reno, inserting Steve Waite into the starting lineup for Steve Krafczyn because "when Big K starts, he tends to get into foul trouble early." Waite finished with 13 points, Krafczyn 10, and Iowa won 112-71. Mission accomplished. But when Olson used the same strategy against Drake, Waite picked up two fouls in the first three minutes. Enter Krafczyn, who scored 23 points with 17 rebounds in a 90-68 win.

Continued

The Great American Beer Switch



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SI TOP 20

1. DePAUL (5-0)	1 *
2. KENTUCKY (4-0)	3
3. UCLA (4-0)	4
4. OREGON STATE (5-0)	5
5. VIRGINIA (5-0)	7
6. NOTRE DAME (4-1)	6
7. MARYLAND (5-1)	2
8. INDIANA (4-2)	6
9. IOWA (5-1)	10
10. TEXAS A&M (5-0)	12
11. OHIO STATE (2-1)	11
12. LOUISIANA ST. (4-1)	14
13. BRADLEY (4-0)	13
14. CLEMSON (5-0)	15
15. WAKE FOREST (6-0)	17
16. N. CAROLINA (6-1)	16
17. ARIZONA ST. (5-0)	18
18. ILLINOIS (4-0)	--
19. WICHITA ST. (6-0)	20
20. MICHIGAN (6-0)	--

* Last week

Iowa outbounded the Bulldogs 66-30.

"Rankings don't mean anything, but if we beat Marquette we definitely belong," said Illinois Forward Eddie Johnson, who was covering himself, win or lose. Johnson then scored 13 points in the Illini's 69-68 win over the Warriors in Milwaukee. Craig Tucker's free throw with 36 seconds left broke a 68-all tie and Illinois held on; with 15 seconds left, Marquette's Oliver Lee missed a jump shot, and with four seconds to play Mark Smith stole the ball. Michigan moved into the SI Top 20 rankings by beating Akron 98-69, Kent State 97-72 and Dayton 85-84.

However, Nevada-Las Vegas Coach Jerry Tarkanian was just plain rankled after losing 87-73 to LSU in Baton Rouge. "I think eventually we're going to be a real good club, but we aren't now," he said. "LSU dismantled us every way there is." Durant Macklin led LSU with 25 points, and Howard Carter added 20. The Rebels lost their fight when Sidney Green fouled out with 17:41 remaining.

DePaul beat Northern Illinois 93-56, and Kentucky, college basketball's all-time winner, beat Kansas, third on the list, 87-73.

MIDWEST After Louisville finally won its first game of the season in four starts, 78-67 over Maryland, Forward Poncho Wright, poet laureate and team wit, tried to put things in perspective: "Everybody thought that 'Ville was ill/But we came out to play Maryland with intent to kill/We beat them convincingly to get over the hill/And now the 'Ville is headed for the Phil" (Philadelphia is the site of the NCAA finals) Wright may have a point. The Car-

inals broke a close game open with a 12-0 spurt early in the second half to take a 58-45 lead and control of the game. "They just got after us. They blocked a few shots, and maybe that intimidated us," said Maryland Coach Lefty Driesell. The Cardinals harassed Maryland into 36.8% shooting, including a 5-for-20 performance by Albert King. Louisville had 15 steals, five blocked shots and probably twice as many intimidations. "Maryland has a good team but they kind of walked into a booby trap," said Guard Jerry Eaves.

After his Missouri Tigers fell hard to Illinois 84-62, Coach Norm Stewart was fuming. "I've got a few players I'd want to get into a car and take a trip with, and I've got about six I'd like to put in a bus and push over a cliff," he said. Top reserve Lex Drum won't be making any trips, because he bailed out earlier in the week citing a "personality conflict" with Stewart. The Tigers, who set an NCAA record for field-goal accuracy last year (57.2%) hit an anemic 40% against the Illini. They went nearly eight minutes without a basket at the start of the second half.

Three members of the Bradley Braves got up extra early Saturday morning for an 8 o'clock astronomy final. That afternoon all the Braves played with their heads in the clouds against Illinois Wesleyan, trailing 32-29 with 69 minutes to go in the game before finally coming down to earth with a 48-42 victory. Hasan Houston, one of the early risers, came off the bench to save the Braves with 16 points. DePaul and Mark Aguirre were all business in an 83-65 win over Texas. An early 6-0 Longhorn lead disappeared after Aguirre had some admonishing words for his teammates. "Come on now, let's get this over with quick," said Aguirre, who did his part by scoring 25 points.

Coach Gene Smithson had a few choices

PLAYER OF THE WEEK

BYRON SCOTT: Arizona State's 6' 5" sophomore guard scored 39 points in leading the Sun Devils to wins over Kansas State and New Mexico. Against the Lobos, Scott converted all 10 of his first-half field goals.

words for his Wichita State squad after the Shockers fell behind Northeast Louisiana 36-29 in a lethargic first half. "A halftime with Coach Smithson is something you have to see to believe," said 6' 8" sophomore Cliff Livingston. Properly motivated, Wichita outscored the Indians 53-27 in the second half, winning 82-63. The most motivated Shockers may have been Antoine Carr. The normally offensive-minded Carr turned into a demon on defense, holding Northeast star Terry Martin to four points in the final 15 minutes of the game. Wichita State also overcame a spill by Long Beach State, downing the 49ers 89-61.

END

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A race that can't stay still.
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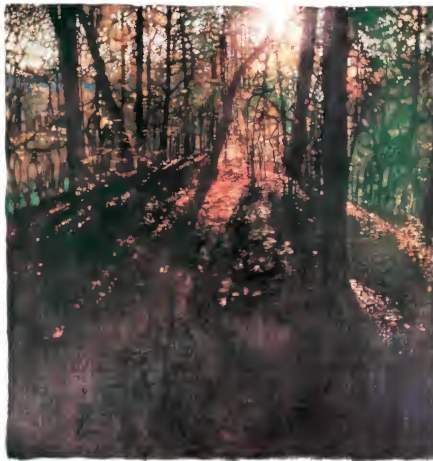
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*There's a spot for each man,
a place he guards as his
though he holds no deed, a
spot like Forty Crook Branch*

by T. H. Kelly



ILLUSTRATIONS BY DEBBIE PUGH

If you happen to hunt a great deal or if you spend a lot of time in the woods for any other reason, there always seems to be a half section of land somewhere that fits you better than it fits anybody else.

Any number of things can attract you to a certain place. It may be that you killed a particularly difficult turkey there, or you may find a specific bend in a creek to be unusually attractive. It could be an outcropping of rock, maybe a special view or perhaps a stand of trees, but it seems that you never go to that place without the distinct feeling that you are coming home, that every tree and rock and fold in the ground is an old friend and that nothing but good things are ever going to happen to you while you are there.

Almost invariably you keep quiet about it. If, by design, you have hunted with the same man for a number of years, he will be aware of this flaw in your character—though he will never discuss it—and will respect your idiosyncrasy. If you are not a wholly insensitive and barbaric clod, you will very likely detect a similar flaw in him and return the favor.

I know, for example, a man who gets distinctly uneasy whenever the area just north of Whetstone Creek in Alabama creeps into the discussion. He does not fidget particularly, or shift his eyes rapidly from side to side, or anything quite so obvious, but his face takes on that carefully expressionless look you use when you are being fulsomely introduced as an afterdinner speaker or when you fill an inside straight. Anytime we hunt near Whetstone Creek, I am as careful to go in the direction he suggests—and stay there—as I am to listen when the location of the guest bathroom in a strange house is given, so I can refrain from opening any other doors on my way down the hall.

I open no strange doors whatever along Whetstone Creek. I do it to be polite. But even if I were impolite and opened them, whatever I saw might not particularly strike my fancy. I only know that somewhere in there something strikes him. Somewhere in there is something he considers private and wants to keep to himself. Obviously he has found a com-

continued

bination of associations that soothe his soul, and it would be as inappropriate for me to pry into it as it would be to ask to see the love letters he wrote his wife when they were courting. Besides, I am not all that interested, anyway, so long as he leaves Forty Crook Branch alone.

I am not really the sole owner of Forty Crook Branch. To be perfectly honest about it, I hold no color of title whatsoever. I pay no taxes on it, run no lines and have no fences. I know that other people go there. I even know that somebody else hunts it. Some bastard killed a hen turkey in there last fall and plucked her at the head of the hollow before he smuggled her out. I found the feathers.

But I have never seen anyone there, and if I am lucky I never will. And on those sleepless nights when I prow around the house, I take a power of comfort in the hope that perhaps the hen murderer has died of leprosy, or maybe of some infinitely more loathsome disease I have never even heard of.

The fact that unknown people may go there doesn't really matter. My lack of proprietorship does not really get to the quick. The core of the matter is that while I am there, I own it, and that is enough.

I cannot, now that I have committed the impropriety of discussing the place at all, tell you exactly what it is that makes it so appealing. God knows I have looked at enough land and timber during my life to be selective, and I have the added advantage of knowing precisely and exactly what my limits are in this respect.

I found this out a good many years ago when my job as a timber manager required me to assess the value of a tract of nearly a quarter-million acres that was to be divided into five equal parts.

We had had a timber cruise, naturally, and had spent some little time poring over stand types and acres and volumes and all the other things that constitute value. But it was decided that a careful appraisal of the property, section by section, by a man who had been relieved of all other duties could best put together an objective opinion of the relative values of the five parts.

I began the job on Thanksgiving Day and finished the first of March. Every morning I would wait in the woods for daylight, and when it got too dark to see I quit and drove home. With the exception of Christmas Day, when I rested, I spent the entire time, with no distractions whatsoever, in a careful and conscientious examination of a block of land with an excellent network of roads. At just about the 200,000-acre mark I made a discovery. Until then I could take the map and put my finger on a section at random, shut my eyes and picture the area in my head with a high degree of accuracy. After that point, old sections passed out of my mind as fast as new ones were added. Obviously, then, I have a 200,000-acre head.

I have not offered these senile maunderings in an attempt to be impressive, but rather to establish that I do have a basis for judgment, that I do have a head full of timber, that my esteem for Forty Crook Branch is not the opinion of a necktie salesman with grandmother's eight acres for comparison.

Forty Crook Branch and its environs are something spe-

cial. If you draw a line from the upper end of Mobile Bay to the northeast corner of Alabama and go partway up the line and a little to the right, you'll locate it, and that is as complete a description as you'll get from me.

The name of the branch itself no longer appears on the map, and I have no idea who named it originally. Most of the place names in my part of the world, except along the coast itself, are either Indian or Scotch-Irish in origin. Whatever other abilities the Celts may have, they have a marvelous flair for pungent and distinctive place names and they have left the mark of this descriptive poetry on natural landmarks all over the Southeast. Names like Burnt Corn Creek and Oven Bluff and Gin House Branch and Goat Hobbie Bald. The Indian names may be even more pungent, but I cannot tell because I speak neither Creek nor Choctaw.

I suspect that Forty Crook Branch was named for the number of curves in it rather than as an allusion to the companions of Ali Baba, but you never know. At any rate, it is remarkably crooked, and the terrain on both sides of the branch and its tiny feeder streams is as steep as any we have. The most pronounced feature of the area is a single central ridge that runs northwest and has a hollow on each side of it that is distinctly different from its matching hollow on the other side.

The hollow on your left—west—is a mixed stand of pine and hardwood and is almost an even mixture of each. I killed a turkey there one fall, early in the morning, that had the unique distinction of being the only flying bird I have ever shot from above. I had missed them on the roost and they were down in the hollow, fighting and squalling at one another to work off the ill humors of early morning, when I heard the racket. I was able to stay under the crest of the ridge on the east side until I got abreast of all the noise and then run across the top and shoot down into the hole. They were all the way down in the bottom of the hollow, a hundred and twenty yards away, and as they came up, one of them flew up the hill to my right, turned and crossed along the slope of the ridge, right to left, and 30 yards below me.

The land is identical and the swing is exactly the same but the feeling is decidedly peculiar. Shooting downhill is, I suppose, appropriate for hunters of mountain goats and bighorn sheep but it is not all that common for bird hunters. Bird hunters get awfully used to looking up when they shoot. Every time I go along that ridge now I stop, and go over to the west side, and in my mind's eye, watch that bird cross below me. I usually take a practice swing or two there, in the highly unlikely event that the situation will come up again. I hope it never does. I am batting a thousand in such instances and there is never two of anything.

This remarkable event notwithstanding, the west hollow is not my favorite site. My choice is the one on the east, and its choicest point is at its head, just as you walk onto the central ridge.

The central ridge begins as a nonentity. It breaks off from a perfectly ordinary looking hill, with some scrubby looking old field loblopy pine thinly mixed among a stand of ratty-looking post oak, and falls gently away to a pile of

lime rock in a thicket of mountain laurel. There is an abrupt right-hand turn in the gap between two lime rocks the size of elephants and an equally abrupt left-hand turn behind the rocks. Once you step beyond the screen of laurel, you are in an open area the size of a small room.

The room is ringed with lime rocks that have been broken by weather and frost, and fossilized clam shells are visible along all of the breaks. The ring is nearly waist-high and the area commands a view of both hollows and the path that follows the crest of the ridge.

Just below the ring, the ridge saddles, and the path beyond the saddle gently rises and passes from sight among the trees. The central ridge then curves gently to the right, beginning at a point just beyond the disappearance of the path, and you have a fine view of the eastern slope.

The first 10 chains of the east hollow are an almost pure stand of beech. I have never understood why the Druids fooled away their time defying an oak tree when beech was available. *Sargent's Manual* lists 19 commercial species of oak indigenous to south Alabama and four species of scrub, and after you get past cherry bark oak, there is not 14¢ worth of class in the lot of them.

Live oak has limbs that twist away from a central trunk for as much as 20 yards and is often festooned with Spanish moss, which I always associate with funerals and pallbearers. Overcup oak has a regrettable tendency to have sucker sprouts all along the trunk, which ruin the symmetry of the bole. All of the red oaks produce a staple food for game, but corn bread and collard greens with side meat are the same kind of staple. You may eat them all the time, but you don't put on your necktie

and specifically take your wife out to dinner just to buy them. They may be good, but they do not go with candle light and damask napkins and brandy and a good cigar afterward.

Beech does.

Not only is a beech tree handsome but it also has a nut that is perfectly delicious. If I were rich and powerful, I would have beechnuts collected by faithful family retainers and put them in my fruitcake rather than pecans. I might even eat them on my cereal for breakfast. A stand of beech, with its smooth blue-gray bark all the way to the stump, is cool and dim and hushed early in the year, when the leaves are on, and light and open and airy in the fall and winter when the white bark on the thin naked branches shines in the afternoon sun.

Forty Crook Branch itself starts in this hollow and makes up from a spring that first appears from under a monstrous lime rock. The branch runs in a series of abrupt turns almost from its beginning and on the inside of most of the bends are what can only be called sandbars, even though most of them are less than 10 feet long and 18 inches wide. The sand in these bars is clean and gray and has tiny flecks of mica in it.

Once, years ago, when she was four years old, I took the Colonel's daughter there—the last half-mile on my back—and cut her name and the date in small, dainty block letters low down on a beech tree. I had brought, in my pocket, a little block of wood with a hole through it, and we set up a flutter mill there in the creek, made out of forked and split sticks and halves of magnolia leaves for blades. The whole thing was tied together with strips of bearpaw.

She watched the wheel run, in delight, and

continued



Both the piney hollow on the western flank of the ridge and the beech-filled hollow on the east hold wild turkeys.

Forty Crook Branch

continued

got both feet wet in the branch, and ran her fingers over her name cut in the bark, and asked me if the shiny flecks of mica were tiny diamonds. I assured her that they were, with the utmost solemnity, and congratulated her upon her perspicacity in finding them.

We swore never to disclose the location of our mine to anybody, but agreed that if, later on, either of us ever needed money the one who needed it could come back and gather some diamonds.

I have never killed a turkey in this hollow, though there is a perfect place to do it from. There is a beech there that

overlooks an arena exactly one gunshot across. The tree has two buttressed roots that come away from the bole on both sides of your butt exactly the right distance apart, and curve down at just the proper height to support each elbow. The ground in front of the tree drops away gently enough to allow you to dig your heels in properly and not leave your knees propped up too high. It is as comfortable as a rocking chair, and I have done some of my very best sleeping there, in the fall, after I had scattered turkeys in the morning and had come back following lunch and it made no real difference where I sat.

I have run a couple of turkeys off the roost there in the spring—turkeys that were gobbling fit to choke themselves—by crowding them in the last few yards of my approach in a futile attempt to get to that tree. In both instances, it was one of those pieces of stupidity that you carefully commit, while your native good judgment is shrieking at you to stop.

I am going to do exactly the same the next time it happens, too, because just one time before I die I am going to kill a turkey out of that rocking chair. It is important. It gets more important every year I don't get to do it.

Below the rocking chair the hollow begins to widen, and you move out of pure beech and begin to run through the mixed stands of upland oak and hickory common to the upper coastal plain. It is at this point that I usually climb the central ridge and walk along it rather than stay down in my favorite hollow. If

you are hunting, you have an opportunity to listen in both hollows simultaneously, and if you are just visiting, you get a marvelous overview of either side. The ridge is so narrow and the sides so steep that as you walk along you are level with the tops of 80-foot trees down in either hollow and it is the next best thing to flying.

Right out on the point of the ridge, nearly a mile from its beginning and just before it drops off, there is a clump of shortleaf, not all that big but old as hell, and you can sit there and listen to the wind in the needles and look out over three-quarters of a county. In cold weather you don't

want to stay too long, the wind gets such a clear shot at you out there, but cold or hot, it is always worth the trip. Even if the sun is not shining, and the rain has wet you straight through, it is still worth it, because the woods are always gloomy on rainy days and there is a certain perverse pleasure in looking out over a quarter-million acres of gloom.

When I leave Forty Crook Branch, I always try to go out so as to pass by the tree in the curve where we built the flutter mill. I never go in in the site itself. I go close enough to see that the tree is still there, that lightning has not struck it or a summer windstorm blown it flat since the last visit. But I never go far enough to see over the little hill and look in at the bottom of the branch. Because I have never gone back for my share of the diamonds.

In point of fact, I have not put my eyes on her name since the day I cut it in the tree. The mill cannot still be there. It was hardly built for the ages and could not have survived the first rainstorm, and I would rather not go back and look at the scene of the ruin. The tree and the mill belong to the day itself, and not to any other.

I never will go back.

So long as I never do, my shares are still there, still held in escrow. So long as I never do, she is still there, always four years old, always under the tree with her name on it, stooped in the sand by her mill with the utter absorption of a little child, enchanted with her diamonds. I hope she never needs them.

END



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By MICHAEL BROWN AND WENDY JONES • 1992

Hey, everybody, it's the Lou Piccone-head Show! Here comes the star now, down out of the ceiling of the Ziegfeld Room at the Executive Motor Inn in Buffalo. The spotlight focuses on the 60-gallon cowboy hat perched atop his head like an open suitcase. Lou Piccone (pronounced pick-cone) graciously doffs the lid to reveal—ta da!—a two-foot-high, flesh-toned, official *Saturday Night Live* luncheon. He steps off the hydraulically powered platform onto the dance floor and gives the 100 or so people a little Johnny Carson.

"How about that call in our game against the Raiders, huh? 'No kneepads.' No kneepads? They got a man coming around this year, he's an official NFL guy, looking for skin. That's his job. 'There will be no flesh on CBS.' Don't you love it? 'There will be no knee on NBC.'"

Piccone's not had. He walks around, pulling the microphone cord behind him like a pro, trying out some simple gags, joshing the NFL's dress rules on the field.

"Can you imagine what this means? Guys running around trying to play football and look good at the same time? Players will be coming downfield and an opponent will say, 'Excuse me, your socks are down.' And you gotta stop and pull them up. Next thing you know, guys will be running past, yelling, 'Hey, take a look at the Goodrich blimp.'"

Who is this Piccone character anyway, with or without that head? Basically, he's a 31-year-old bomb-squadder-receiver-fill-in-the-blank player for the Bills, now in his seventh NFL year. He's small and he's compact, 5' 9" and 175 pounds, and he's a great talker, an intense, self-deprecating, genuinely funny guy. He

Live from Buffalo, it's the...

Lou Piccone-head Show, starring the ever-popular Mr. Do-It-All of the Bills

does these shows every Monday night between halves of the NFL game because, "I like entertaining, I like people, and I like getting off my rear." He's single, drives a red Cadillac (that seems to swallow him like a pig eating an acorn whenever he climbs in), and is one of the most popular sports figures in northwestern New York. All he has to do is line up at his R-4 position on the kickoff squad at Rich Stadium and 80,000 people begin chanting, "Lou! Lou! Lou!" To an unsuspecting visitor unable to distinguish "L's" from "B's," it sounds as though the crowd is booing some poor soul into oblivion.

Piccone came to the NFL via the tough-luck highway—from Vanland, N.J., through West Liberty State College ("located," says Lou, "somewhere in West Virginia"), to the semipro and the free-agent tryouts—and it's rather remarkable that he should be holding court in front of all these nicely dressed, receptive people in the Ziegfeld Room. It's even more remarkable that this self-described "poor little nobody" should be one of the rallying points on a team that is the No. 1 surprise of the NFL season.

After the show, Lou sits down at a table and says that, yeah, he has got a pretty good thing here in Buffalo. He loves the city (he lives in Buffalo year-round, running a firewood business during the winter). He loves his teammates. He loves the success of the team. But he's not exactly happy. Why? Because, well, he'd like a little more appreciation—not from the fans; he loves them, too—but from management. In short, he could stand a richer contract.

"Actually, it's not so much the money as it is a matter of establishing respect," Piccone says. "In this game respect is denoted by money;



Piccone enters enliven Monday night TV games for Buffaloesans

continued

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PRO FOOTBALL *continued*

that's the only correlation you've got."

Piccone has been trying to get that respect (and the cash) since he first made it with the New York Jets in 1974. A stubborn, excitable kind of guy, Lou has a history of holding out to make his point. He walked out on the Jets in his second year, and he didn't show up at all for the Bills' training camp this year. Piccone has played out his option twice, and this year he signed only a one-year contract with Buffalo, meaning he may take a hike next season as well.

"I've only played for two pro teams, but I've had six head coaches," Piccone says, trying to focus some of his frustration. "They come in and the first thing they want to do is clean house. They look around, see me and figure, 'We gotta get rid of this guy.' They run me through a computer and I come out in the trash can. So each time I have to re-prove myself. And I've done it." Lou is heating up a little now, he doesn't need a cone-head to be a forceful speaker. "I'm consistent. I've got skills. I'm good. I've won games for these stupid bleeps!"

Piccone presents his fans with the classic little-guy-versus-the-system conflict, and they love him for it. Jet fans first started the "Lou! Lou! Lou!" chants in 1975 when Piccone returned from his maiden walkout. The fans were used to No. 1 draft choices with gumpy knees and Broadway calling cards getting uppity, but a pint-sized free agent from the Youngstown Hardhats and Bridgeport Jets acting up? Now that was class. Lou's contract that year was for \$15,000, but fines and the mandatory option year cut had reduced it to \$12,900, the lowest figure in the league. "People were happy to see me back," says Lou, starting to feel better again. "They could identify with me. After all, I was making less than your average garbage collector."

Though Piccone now makes closer to \$80,000 a year, there are those (besides Lou) who feel he should get a lot more. Larry Felsner of the *Buffalo Evening News* recently wrote, "This is the time to tear up Lou Piccone's one-year contract and ensure that he'll be around here for a long time, doing the grubby things which win football games."

They are grubby things, too: breaking through wedges, running down punt returners, blocking out men who often outweigh him by 75 pounds or more. There are some glamorous duties as well. Piccone comes in and routinely makes clutch

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catches on third down; he returns punts; he fills in as a starting receiver. Last year Bob Chandler and Jerry Butler were sidelined at various times and Lou caught 33 passes for 556 yards and two touchdowns. This year he was injured himself, straining ligaments in his knee in practice, and missed seven weeks of the schedule; he returned to the Bills' lineup on Nov. 30.

"A seventh-year starting receiver gets \$120,000 and all he does is catch passes," says Lou. "I catch passes, too. Plus I know all the receiver positions—X, Y and Z—the halfback position, and even the tight end. Plus, I'll go down on kickoffs. Those guys won't touch that."



Lou's Cadillac has a real *lou* Piqueone for an escutcheon, but it definitely could use a hubcap.

Lou signs a few autographs, then thinks of something. "Earlier this year I got rejected," he says. Excuse me? "On a kickoff against New Orleans I got buried. I was trying to sift a wedge and instead I got sifted, put out, rejected. Later, maybe I can show it to you on film. It's quite shocking." In fact, the scene is so gripping, such a perfect example of the point Piqueone has been trying to make about getting paid for his services, that he decides to reconstruct it verbally now, without visual aids.

"I was flying downfield in my normal manner, you understand, but I wasn't in a real good stance, I was a little flatfooted. Two guys hit me at the same time, one on each shoulder. They knocked me backwards and buried me in the turf. I

put my feet on one guy's chest to roll him off me—he went about 240, a nice-sized boy—and my legs were straight in the air, my neck down, when I was suddenly engulfed by three more bodies. I didn't get the numbers of the vehicles, though I know from the film that one was Dee Hardison, who'll go 270. There was at least a thousand pounds on my neck. It was a petrifying hit.

"I lay face down on the field for a while, out, before they helped me off. Elijah Pitts, our special teams' coach, implied that it was a questionable hit, not that bad. Then he came up to me after seeing the film and said he was awfully sorry, that anybody who could take a lick

an article about Lou, equipment man Chuck Ziobor, only 5' 8" himself, says, "I bet it's going to be a short story."

Sometimes, even when Piqueone thinks he's getting respect, he discovers he isn't. On a golf outing last summer he informed second-string Quarterback Dan Manucci that he, Lou, had just been invited to join the Italian American Sports Hall of Fame in Chicago.

"Did they send you a certificate and ask for some personal belongings?" asked Manucci.

"Yeah," said Lou. "Why?"

"I got the same letter."

Life probably wasn't meant to be easy for Piqueone. He grew up, he explains, "as your basic wayward youth from New Jersey. I wasn't into crime or anything; actually, I was more like an alcoholic. My high school buddies and I would booze it up on weekends and then go into Philadelphia and dance our heads off. Sports were the only things that kept me from going into a complete stupor."

At West Liberty State, where Lou helped pay his way, he distinguished himself in football by riding the bench for long periods of time and occasionally ripping off fearless, even bizarre, punt returns. "That was kind of funny," says Lou. "I used to wear glasses and I was fairly blind. Catching a ball was not one of my better skills. And the reason I ran right into the middle of crowds was because I didn't know there was such a thing as a fair catch. Nobody had ever told me."

After school Lou played two years of semipro ball in Youngstown, Ohio, and Bridgeport, Conn., and began making the rounds of the NFL free-agent camps. He tried out for the Eagles, the Redskins and the Jets, and each time was told the same thing—forget it. "Those camps were zoos," Lou recalls. "Hundreds of people mulling all around—fat slob, hippies, weirdos, guys on lunch break from McDonald's. So when the coaches told me to take a powder, I realized it didn't mean anything. It just meant they hadn't seen me. I wasn't on their agenda for the day."

On his second try with the Jets, Lou made it, primarily because of his 4.4 speed. "Not all white guys are slow, you know," he says. In his rookie year, 1974, Lou played on all the special teams and led the NFL in kickoff returns with 39 for 961 yards. But what he really gained during his three years with the Jets was the knowledge that pro football is as

continued

like that and still play, well, my God."

Lou's whole career has been marked by heavy blows. The day he was traded to the Bills from the Jets in 1977, he was in the Jets' parking lot in Hempstead, L.I., lamenting the fact that his brand-new, white-on-white pinstripe Corvette had just been stolen. Walt Michaels, the head coach, approached him. "Sorry about your car, Lou," he said, "but I wanted to tell you that you've been traded to Buffalo." Lou thinks it's funny, now. "I was ripped off and traded off in one day," he says.

In the locker room Little Lou is fair game for anyone. "When Lou checked into the NFL, they only gave him half a computer card," says Guard Conrad Dobler. Hearing that a reporter is writing

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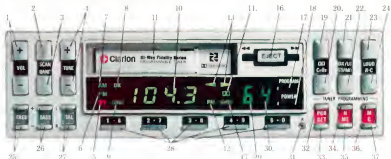
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Bott smiled, then answered, "You should have asked me is \$900 for the first fully programmable car radio *too cheap*?"

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What you do get is the world's first fully programmable car radio with 37 separate functions that balance and integrate perfectly into one masterful technologically advanced chassis.

With Clarion's PE959A, you sit back while it switches automatically to the stations and times you've pre-programmed. That means you can listen to your favorite stereo music, then to a timely traffic report, to a sporting event, to a news commentary — without ever having to take your hands off the wheel.

And though it looks and acts like your own private computer, the PE959A will fit virtually every car because the front

plate snaps on like a circuit board. It also provides a quick connect DIN plug for fast installation with Clarion or other external amplifiers.

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There's little question with audiophiles that the new PE959A is a great investment — even at \$900. And that today, when quality is hard to come by at any price, the same value permeates every aspect of Clarion's business, from the middle range products right up to the top of the line.

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QUALITY FOR THE MAGIC IN MUSIC



much show biz and absurdity as sport.

The same year Lou was earning \$12,900, Joe Namath, who was no longer a force as a quarterback, was earning \$450,000, nearly 35 times as much as Lou; star Fullback John Riggins was demanding a five-year, \$1.5 million contract; and the Jets were going 3 and 11. "You know something," Lou said to a reporter in 1975, the carnival atmosphere obviously having influenced his thinking, "with the right promotion I could be a star, too. I'm small, I'm Italian, I can beat any safety in the league. They'd have to love me."

So, everybody up. It's 7:30 on a Wednesday morning and it's time for the Lou Piccone Show. This program comes courtesy of WKBW radio in Buffalo—a thrice-weekly dialogue between deejay Danny Neaverth and Lou.

"Lou, we're doing great," says Danny. "Where do we go from here?"

"We go to San Diego," says Lou.

The Bills will win in San Diego, beating the Chargers for the first time since 1965, but right now Lou is still feeling good about the big plays he made against Oakland the previous Sunday. There was a tackle at the 18-yard line on a kickoff coverage, a critical third-down pass reception for a first down, and a recovery of a fumbled punt. All those plays had started Rich Stadium rocking with "Lou! Lou! Lou!" and had obviously fired up the rest of the Bills.

"Lou can do that," says Quarterback Joe Ferguson. "He's a clutch player. I'd hate for him to hear this [Ferguson peers furtively around the locker room], but we have some third-down plays designed just for him."

Even the really big Bills look up to Lou. "We do respect him," says Fred Smerlas, Buffalo's 6' 3", 270-pound nose tackle. "He still plays special teams better than anyone in the NFL, even when they double-team him. I wrestle him all the time in the locker room, and he's tough to get down."

Piccone is tough. He's always said that nobody can intimidate him, and the day they can, "Jeez, I'd better get out of this league." In one game with the Jets, Lou refused to fair-catch a punt and was mowed under, taking an opponent's helmet directly in the face, a blow that shattered his nose. On the next kickoff Lou ran all the way across the field and "earholed" his tackler. "I just wanted him to



As defenders like L.A.'s Nolan Cromwell have discovered, Piccone is no idle threat as a receiver.

know I was still in the game. I still want people to know that."

"Lou's short, but he's not little," says Plitts. "He's strong enough to be out there." Indeed, Piccone has a 17½-inch neck, a 45-inch chest and can press 275 pounds over his head, factors that help him survive each Sunday. He has worked hard at weight-training and at the skills of his trade. He wears contact lenses, which have improved his vision, and through years of practice has developed, according to Coach Chuck Knox, "good hands, good body control and sharp cuts."

Knox, who came to the Bills in 1978, has grown to admire the feisty Piccone, and even appreciates Lou's constant quest for love and money. "Lou will go across the middle, into the brier patch where it's thick, and come up with the ball," Knox says. "That inspires a team. It's his self-esteem, really, his concept of self-worth, that enables Lou to do so well. And we certainly don't want to destroy that confidence; we want to build on it."

It is nearly midnight now but Lou has driven out to Rich Stadium with a visitor to locate the spool of film that contains the mighty hit he received in the New Orleans game. He finds it and in a coach's empty office sets up a projector and runs the film forward to the play. There it is now in silent black and white, the only sounds being the whirring of the projector and the visitor's restrained gasps. In slow motion Lou is flattened by two opponents, rolled onto his neck, obliterated by a mass of bodies, folded in half, crushed—indeed, rejected.

One suspects that a normal person would have been killed by the series of blows. In fact, Lou appears to be dead as the camera pans away with him still motionless, face down on the turf. But then, in the next kickoff frame, Lou is back at R-4, flying down the field in his usual manner, looking for a wedge to sift.

"Well, that's me," says Lou, flipping on the light. "Rocky was fiction. But I'm the real thing. In abbreviated form, of course." Of course. END

BABY, IT'S COLD



OUTSIDE

"Great!" say the Polar Bears, hardy souls who love to leap into frigid waters and, sometimes, lure a novice in, too

by

JOAN ACKERMANN-BLOUNT



CONTINUED

First comes my mother," Pablo Martinez Velilla said as he broke off a large chunk of ice and placed it on his head. "No, God and my mother. Then comes the Polar Bear Club. Polar Bear Club is my family. Without it I don't feel happy." Pablo looked very happy as he turned and waved to the crowd. Up where the onlookers were, the air temperature was 15°, but down where we were, in the water, the temperature was a toasty 30°. That's why Eli Cohen, who's very skinny—"You have to look at him twice to see him," says a fellow Polar Bear—and tends to get cold, was lying

in the water. He was trying to get warm.

Little icicles had formed on the hair on Pablo's chest. As he danced around entertaining the crowd in all the amusing freezing ways he could think of, the piece of ice wobbled on his balding head. "Once I had a big chunk of ice on my head," he said. "It weighed about 17 pounds. It was 20 below zero and the ice stuck to my head, so I had to go under the water and wait there for it to loose off."

Pablo spends much of his life under cold water with the Polar Bears. So does Helene Santini, who pointed out

the virtues of swimming. "With swimming you don't have that earth impact," she said. "You float. It's nice. It's one sport you don't need equipment for; you have yourself. It's a sport you can enjoy all year round. In winter it's just a question of mind over matter; you over-matter it."

Over-mattering is definitely the problem in the dead of winter, which is when the Polar Bears swim. In the Soviet Union they're called Walruses; in Ireland they're Forty-footers (named for the depth of the water in which club members originally swam); and in America they're Polar Bears. They're people who wade through snow and ice to swim in freezing water because they think it's good for them. "If you keep your body at a cooler temperature, you live longer," said Helene. "Like keeping meat on ice. That's food for thought."

ILLUSTRATIONS BY CHARLES SAXON



The Polar Bears are people who wade through snow and ice to swim in freezing water because they think it's good for them

Last winter, two nights before I was to drive from my house in western Massachusetts to the Adirondack region of New York and go swimming with the Coney Island (N.Y.) Polar Bear Club in Lake George, some pipes in my cellar froze. It was Feb. 1 and the temperature had dropped to -4°. I spent the next afternoon in the cellar, standing on a chair and pointing a flashlight at the frozen pipes, while my plumber, all bent over in a tiny crawl space, tried to thaw them with a propane torch.

"You really think I could get frostbite if I go in?" I asked for the third time.

"Oh yeah," he said, chucking for the third time. "You ever hear of hypothermia? Damn, another leak." We both watched the water trickle out through yet another crack in the copper pipe.

"No. What's hypothermia?"

"That's when your body temperature drops so low your heart stops. Could you shine the light over there for a sec?" I heard him mutter something under his breath as he crawled over and began cutting out another piece of pipe.

"Your heart stops?"

"That's right, just like your furnace there. Central heating shuts off. Gee, you bury a cat up here or something? Bunch of bones." He threw the bones aside. "I say anyone who swims in a lake that's got a foot of ice on it has got to be crazy. Nothing personal, of course."

"That's O.K.," I said, blowing on my hands to warm them up.

"Why don't you do a story about my wife instead?" he said, lying on his back and using the torch again. "She makes all our soup."

It wasn't that I needed a story. I really wanted to go swimming with the Polar Bear Club. I've always loved to swim in cold water. I never feel more alive than when I am standing on my head in water cold enough to make a tadpole cry. Cold water gets into my mind, it eats up that thick layer of lint around the brain. I'm better at problem solving and pushups when I've just emerged from frigid H₂O. I see colors I don't ordinarily notice. Surfaces I thought of as smooth suddenly reveal layer upon layer of intricate texture. That's why I wanted to swim with the Polar Bears; I knew they were into something good, and I didn't want them to be in while I was out. But hypothermia? Frostbite?

When I'd called Al Mottola, the president of the Coney Island Polar Bear Club, and told him I wanted to swim with the club, he hadn't said anything about hypothermia. I'd mentioned pneumonia, and he'd replied, "What's that?" So I'd laughed along with him and said that I wanted to join the group in their regular Sunday swim at Coney Island. He'd explained that for the next five weeks the club would be swimming up at Lake George instead, as part of the town's annual Winter Carnival.

"We put on a little show for the people," he'd said on the phone. "Seven of us are going up this weekend. Why don't you come and swim with us? Stay for the weekend."

"Isn't it a little cold up there?"

"Naah," he'd said. "It's all mind over matter. You'll see."

"I mean, isn't there a bunch of ice on the lake?"

"There's a little place there where it doesn't freeze over. You'll see."

"Well, O.K."

It was after the plumber told me about hypothermia that I thought I should get some medical advice. I called a doctor I'd once had an appointment with in Great Barrington, a town near where I live. He told his nurse to tell me that I was physically fit and that I could go ahead and swim. I could hear the nurse laughing even after she hung up the phone.

"He doesn't really know me," I told my husband. "What does he care?"

Half an hour before I departed on the three-hour drive to Lake George, I called my old family doctor in Cambridge, Mass. The old family doctor who'd listened to my heart for 29 years, who knew its rhythms, its post, its limitations.

"You think I'm crazy to go in?"

"Yes," he said without hesitation. "I think it's potentially dangerous. Bundle up really well and go down to the lake's edge and watch them. Just because those people are crazy enough to do it doesn't mean you have to be."

That settled it. I wasn't going in.

Helene is from the Bronx and she works as a betting clerk at Off-Track Betting. "I'm 47," she said with a strong New York accent, "about the same age as Elvis Presley would be, the same era of time; people covered everywhere with

zippers. You know, back then an egg cream was the extent of our high."

She's a full-bodied blonde, and when she walks barefoot on the ice in her bathing suit greeting the crowd, she moves with style, holding her hands out like a dancer and twisting them in curlicues. The trick to walking on ice on your bare feet is to keep moving. When Helene shakes the hands of spectators and chats with them, she doesn't jump up and down; she gently picks up her toes and shifts her weight in a barely perceptible movement. She appears more comfortable and relaxed than the spectators, who are tense and bent over, buried under layers of clothing, trying to stay warm.

"I don't like to swim in the summer," she said, squinching up her face. "Why bother? I came back from swimming in the summer once and I squeezed oil out of my bathing suit and my eyes got all pulled up for days. The water is much cleaner in the winter. There aren't germs in cold water. You don't see roaches in Alaska, do you? I remember the sand at the beach from when I was a teen-ager; it was so white it was beautiful. Now the Atlantic Ocean along Long Island is blackish, greasy and swirly. It cleans out in the winter."

"My father used to take me swimming when I was a little kid and we lived in upstate New York. We used to swim in well water. It was cold. When I moved to the Bronx, my friends told me I should swim with the Polar Bears. So I went up the beach one Sunday, and there was this guy Frank dressed up as Santa Claus giving out candies to the kids. I went swimming, but some of the older women were jealous. You know, the club was all they had. It's very important to people."

"When Destin Kaboshi came to this country from Albania he couldn't speak English. Then he joined the Polar Bear Club and now he feels important. And Eli, You wouldn't have seen the same prototype before. He's really picked up. He used to stand around like this [she slouched over and hung her head]. Now he's changed. Slowly but surely you overcome your fears. It's not just overcoming the water, it's overcoming something else in your prior life."

"People who never made it in the sports world can make it through the Polar Bear Club. When Pablo gave you that list of all the Puerto Ricans in the club,

continued



I put my index finger in the water, but it was too dark to see what color it turned, red, purple or plaid.

you got to read between the lines. What the list says is, "Look, America. We're here. We made it. We're in..."

"I'm not going in," I told my husband as I got into the car. "It's potentially dangerous." He appeared relieved.

I brought my bathing suit, anyway. It was a cheap \$8 one-piece with a snazzy racing stripe on each side. I put it on the front seat next to me along with some apples, a bag full of chocolate chips and a carton of milk. By the time I got to Lake George, it was night and everything in the seat was gone except my bathing suit. It hung over the edge of the seat like a deprived dog.

I stopped at a Howard Johnson's for supper and picked up a free publication, *A Guide to the Lake George Region*, to read with my sandwich. The Guide had this note on hypothermia: "Hypothermia can cause death. If you notice you or a companion experiencing slow reactions, stumbling, or acting confused after being chilled outdoors, find a heated room and re-warm the person as quickly as possible." I couldn't think of a question I was less capable of answering than: "Am I acting confused?" And could I rely on the Polar Bears, people who hardly knew me and who didn't even acknowledge pneumonia, to observe such a shift in my behavior?

"Have you ever watched the Polar Bears swim?" I asked the friendly waitress who poured me coffee.

"Oh yes, every year," she said with enthusiasm. "I almost went in last year except I was too big for my bathing suit."

"Really? You almost went in?"

"Oh, they get you so charged up you wouldn't believe it. The chief of police goes in every year. And the queen and her court."

"The queen of the Winter Carnival?"

"That's right," she said.

"A beauty queen goes swimming with the Polar Bears?"

"Yep. Every year."

"They fetcher?"

"Yep."

That was really irritating. It was one thing to stand by and watch a bunch of strapping Polar Bears splash around and flirt with potential danger, but it was quite another to watch a person who was there solely on the strength of her looks. *With her court!*

"Are you planning on going in tomorrow?" I asked the waitress.

"I might," she said.

"I'll go in if you'll go in."

"All right," she said cheerfully.

"Please don't," I whispered into the creosote as she went off to pick up an order.

"You don't have anything to worry about," said a burly man sitting next to me. "We never lost anyone to the marble orchard from swimming in Lake George."

"My doctor advised me not to go in," I said feebly.

"Look, I'll be there tomorrow. I'll make sure you don't get hypothermia, and if you do get sick, you can tell your doctor to send the bill to us."

That was comforting.

"What's the big deal?" said an elderly woman whose head was obscured by a gigantic coconut layer cake. "If you go in and you start turning purple, they make you come out. If you turn red, it's O.K. Either your blood flows fully or it doesn't. What's the big deal? I'm sick of it."

"I'll look for you tomorrow," said the waitress, returning with my check.

"Great," I said, approving my glass of ice water and wondering if I could nonchalantly stick my finger in to see if it would turn purple or red. "What's your name?"

"Angel," she said.

Oh swell, I thought as I got back into my car. I'm about to risk spending a purple eternity in a marble orchard with a woman named Angel.

Down on the lake a bearded man was cutting blocks out of the ice with a chain saw.

"Building a staircase for the Polar Bears," he said, pointing to the half-finished structure that descended the bank to the lake. It was impressive. Small Doric columns of ice supported the fancy frozen bannister. The light from a trailer parked by the side of the road cast a dramatic light on the ice, imbuing the staircase with a milky glow.

"Is that where they swim?" I asked.

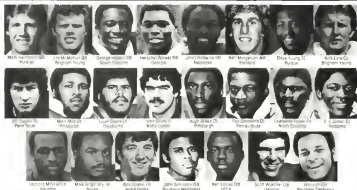
"Yeah, right down there."

There was a small area about the size of a swimming pool where the currents prevented the water from freezing over. I walked to the shore, knelt down and put my index finger in the water. I might as well have stuck it in the mouth of a snapping turtle. I couldn't see what color my finger turned, red, purple or plaid. It was so dark I could barely see the mountains on the other side of the lake. About 100 yards from me, the outlines of the summer sightseeing boats ached in at the town pier only emphasized the fact that it was winter, that it was the time of year to approach the lake wearing skates, not a bathing suit. My finger throbbled slightly, dying in the night air.

The chief of police was in the trailer with a few people, including a woman and her chubbly 8-year-old son. They said they went in every year.

continued

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"Last year I had a hard time getting in," said the boy. "I just couldn't get my blood going. But when I finally got in, I stayed in 20 minutes."

His mother smiled. "I had a hard time getting him out," she said. "You know, the secret to swimming in cold water is to not let your muscles tense up. If you panic you squeeze the air out of your body."

"Are you going in again tomorrow?" I asked the chief of police.

"No," he said. "I can't afford to get sick."

I checked into my motel, the Fort William Henry, and my hand almost froze while I tried to unlock the door to my room. It was painfully cold. The Polar Bears hadn't arrived from New York, so I had time to collect my thoughts. Suddenly, it occurred to me to call my Uncle Steve, a doctor in California and a very positive person. What he said was, "I think it's safe for somebody your age to do just about anything except stand in front of a moving car or jump into a vat of boiling oil." He also said the Polar Bears probably knew more about hypothermia than any doctor.

"To join the Polar Bear Club, you have to fulfill two requirements," Al explained to me the next morning over breakfast. "First, you have to be empathetic. By that I mean you have to get along well with everyone else. We have such a diversity of people, economically, educationally and ethnically, that there has to be a common denominator, a friendly element that holds everybody together."

There was a varied group sitting at the table with Al that morning. Helene was there. So was Desain, a hefty dock worker who speaks little English and looks like Tito. And Ala Quent, a nurse from Germany, who was a candidate for membership. And Eli, a Brooklynite who looks like an emaciated Tony Orlando and drives for a

car service. And Pablo, a customs official from Puerto Rico and vice-president of the club. And Al's Brooklyn-born wife, Irene, who isn't a Polar Bear.

Al, who was from San Diego originally, is not only president of the Coney Island Polar Bear Club, but he's also president of the New York Office Machine Dealers. He's a great-grandfather, though his sturdy athletic body and broad shoulders make him look a good 20 years younger than his 65 years. "I've seen Al race guys 25 years old on the beach and beat them," says Helene. Despite his physical strength, Al confesses he has "a little inferiority complex," and when he smiles his eyebrows arch up as sweetly as the scarecrow's in *The Wizard of Oz*. "Al has natural brains," said Helene.

"Of course, the other requirement for joining the club is you have to like fresh air and cold-water swimming." Al continued. "You have to swim at least twice a month from November through March. Every March or April we have a secret vote to admit new members. Now there are 25 members, the average age is 61, and we have more than 100 auxiliary members who do everything but swim with us. They jog, play with the medicine ball; they're loyal followers."

"Do you ever get cold?" I asked.

"Cold? What's cold? It's all in the mind. Look, say you're indoors, it's February and you look outside and the thermometer says 50°. You feel warm, right?"

In the middle of winter, 50° is warm. Now, say it's August and you look out and the thermometer says 50°. You feel cold, right? Your mind telegraphs to your body how it feels."

"Do you really get spectators to come in and swim with you?"

"Oh yes, I think, though, that ours is the only club that does that. Some of the other clubs can be really snuffed. They act like they're doing something no one else can do. We don't. We try to get people involved."

"But can everybody do it? Don't you need to be conditioned for it? I mean, wouldn't it be bad for some people? [Mc. for instance?]

"I have a saying: 'If you go into the water and you turn blue, this isn't the sport for you.' Turning blue means that you have poor blood circulation and your extremities can freeze because the blood doesn't get to them. You should turn bright red, like you've been out in the sun. We watch for people, though. We don't let anyone stay in too long."

"Why does a person turn red?"

"When you go into the cold water you're asking your body to do something to keep you warm. To do that, it makes the blood rise very close to the skin and circulate very fast, and that's very healthy. It keeps you from getting hardening of the arteries."

"Do people ever get heart attacks from going into cold water?"

"No. Listen, you have a much greater chance of getting a heart attack in the summer than you do in the winter. In the summer you're going from very hot air to cold water and that can be a shock. In the winter the water is warmer than the air; it's not the same shock to the system."

We'd all finished eating, except for Eli, who was beginning his third large breakfast. He grinned and waved his fork at us from the other end of the table. Everybody laughed.

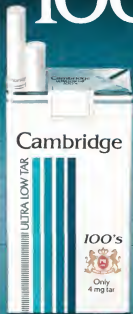
"The club means

continued



"I have a saying," said Al. "If you go in the water and turn blue, this isn't the sport for you."

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Pablo said, "Give me ice cream!" and then put a chunk of ice on his head.

different things to each of us." Al said quietly. "But all of us leave our worries and pressures behind when we go to the beach. There's one woman, Mantha Grondski, from Sweden, who couldn't come this weekend. She's in her 70s and she has her own philosophy. She says when she goes to the water she pours her troubles into the ocean and lets them float away." His eyebrows arched up.

It was a sunny day, cold and windy—which is the one thing all Polar Bears hate because of the chill factor.

"There's hardly any snow," Eli said to Destin, who just shrugged and grinned.

"Too bad. We use the snow in our show," Al said. "We rub it over our bodies to get us going. Having no snow is like having a room without a carpet."

"That's right," said Helene. "Snow's the icing on the cake. It makes you feel secure. Oh well, that's life."

"One February they made a cake for me out of the snow," said Pablo, walking along beside me. He's a small man with a round face and a thin, carefully shaped mustache. He wore a captain's hat, and on the back of his black denim jacket was a picture of a polar bear set in an arctic scene. Pablo's jacket was covered with souvenir patches, and he even

had a little license plate that said PABLO sewn on the front. "They cut the cake and I got inside and they covered me up with snow. I left my feet sticking outside to show that I was all right. If my feet stopped moving, something would be wrong. I was there for seven minutes and then I felt someone starting to brush the snow away from my face. I got mad because I wanted to stay longer. Then I saw it was the queen, so I said O.K. She had some real cake for me. I got up and ate the cake, and there were more than 10,000 people singing happy birthday to Pablo. It was a beautiful little ceremony." He took a quick skip in his gait. "You know, my birthday isn't really in February," he said.

Some of the Polar Bears were dancing around, urging passers-by to come to the 2 p.m. swim. "On paper I'm 58," Pablo went on, "but really I'm 59. I'm most

proud of being a Polar Bear. Polar Bear makes me feel healthy, makes me feel important. Not my job. My job gives me money to take care of my mother."

"It's just the two of you?"

"That's right. She takes care of me. I take care of her."

"How does she feel about your swimming in cold water?"

"First time I went in, she prayed. Me too. I climbed inside a wave and kneeled down and prayed to God. It was quiet in there and I knew God was in there with me and everything was safe inside."

"Pablo!" He stopped and waved to three teen-age girls who had shouted to him. This was the eighth year that the club had come to Lake George, so they were well known by the townspeople.

"I like any place cold," Pablo said, beaming. "When you are in a cold place your body asks you to move, and when you move you feel good. I was dreaming once we were going to Russia and it was a paradise of ice. That's right, a paradise of ice. That's heaven to me." He turned and waved to the girls again.

When we got back to the motel we all sat around in Al's room while he played a few tunes on the glockenspiel. Then Helene and I went for a jog outside on the

balcony that ran along the second floor of the motel. It was 15° and she ran barefoot in a black bathing suit that was covered with camels and patches from past winter carnivals. For a second I thought she was going to jog in her black high-heeled boots, but she left them by the door. I wore my bathing suit, too, but it was buried deep under several layers of clothing and long underwear.

We jogged back and forth a few times and Helene said, "You know, when I come back I want to come back as a water bug. Some people might like to come back as a princess. Not me. I want to come back as a water bug. I have a friend who put a glass upside down over a water bug. Three days later she picked up the glass and the water bug walked out. When the city dies, the water bugs will live on. That's what I want to be." She put a hand up and smoothed back her hair.

We went into her room, which she shared with Ala, the candidate for Polar Bear membership, who hadn't yet decided if she was going in the water or not. "I never went swimming in February," she told me appreciatively. "November was the latest. But the nerves! It's so good for the nerves!"

En route to the lake, to showtime, the orange Polar Bear van was bursting with energy. Everybody was whooping and hollering and singing. "Vo-la-re, Oh, oh! Vo-la-re, Oh oh oh oh!" and stamping their feet, getting charged up for the swim. Al pounded the beat out on the dashboard, and Helene, after putting her jewelry in an envelope ("I find it sticks to my chest"), clapped her hands and bounced up and down on her seat. The Polar Bears were feeling good, in spite of the wind and the scarcity of snow.

"Look!" said Pablo when we arrived at the lake. "They build me my dream igloo!" He was pointing to the completed ice staircase, which to him must have looked like a stairway to paradise.

I knew that the moment Al, his whistle dangling on his chest, extended his hand to me from the water, I'd go in. I'd been cheering too loudly and singing with too much pleasure not to stick with him all the way. If he'd been reaching to me from a patch of nettles or from a burning car wreck, I probably would've joined him, as long as he had that same expression, that same smile. "Look," he said,

continued



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"I THINK."



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THUNDERBIRD

FORD DIVISION



POLAR BEARS

continued

"they all think we're crazy, but let's just shake up their perception of the world a little bit. And have a great time doing it!" There was a big crowd, at least a thousand astonished people. I didn't see Angel, the waitress, anywhere.

My clothes dropped off in seconds—wool hat, scarf, mittens, sweaters, heavy coat, boots, thick thermal socks, everything I'd worn to combat the cold was gone—and I was sprinting toward the water in my trusty bathing suit. Fear of hypothermia was gone, left behind in that world where people get cold and complain about it.

There was the Polar Bear flag planted by the lake. There was a large, round thermometer on a pole stuck in the water; it said 15°. There was Pablo, standing on his head on the ice and saying, "Give me ice cream!" Destin was filling his mouth with snow. Helene was promerading on the ice, swaying her hips and shaking hands with spectators, who gazed at her with awe. "They look at you like you're in a goldfish bowl or something. It's a mental thing," said Helene. To escape the wind, Eli lay submerged up to his chin in a shallow stretch of water. He was smiling.

I took Al's extended hand, and he pulled me in, gesturing with his other hand toward the water as if he were introducing me to my dancing partner. Who knows what the water felt like. We were in it, that's all. It seemed like the good old water I'd used that morning to brush my teeth, but I knew that each drop housed a monster capable of sucking the warmth out of my bones if I yielded to it for less time than it takes to eat a quick lunch. The second I was in, I was moving. As Pablo had said, "When you're in a cold place your body asks you to move." It wasn't deep enough to swim, but Al and I crouched down, jumped up, thrashed and splashed and whipped our arms around like windmills. He poured water on my back; I poured water on his. He screamed all kinds of funny whoops and hollers, and so did I. A TV cameraman was shooting us from the banks, and I wanted to belt out, "Look, Angel, I'm here! I made it!" Al blew on his whistle, and the onlookers cheered through all their flannel and down. I was so carried away that I probably would've stayed in longer than I should've, but Al was keeping an eye on me. After a couple of minutes,

I guess, he took my hand and escorted me up onto the bank where Destin was kissing somebody's baby. I was still moving.

Pablo came over and grabbed my hands, pulling first one and then the other very hard, very fast. "Hi! Hi! Hi!" he yelled. "This is the bicycle exercise. It keeps your blood going."

Helene was there with a blanket she'd brought for me, but I didn't need it. One interesting thing about swimming in frigid water is that you don't need a towel. "Towels have a tendency to get hard and scratch you, anyway," said Helene. The water on your body dries almost instantly. And you don't feel cold. That sounds hard to believe, but when you come out of frigid water on a frigid day, your skin feels warm. The blood is racing around your system and you feel like you're glowing. You feel terrific.

"I feel great!" said a man who'd jumped in. Several onlookers had taken a plunge, but none of them stayed in anywhere near as long as the Polar Bears. They were real pros.

I scooted up to the trailer and changed back into my clothes with Kathleen Carthy, the Winter Carnival queen. She was hanging around in there with her court.

"It really wasn't so bad," she said. "My feet got cold but that's all."

When I returned to the water's edge, the Polar Bears were still in; they kept getting out and going back in. There were newspaper reporters and people from TV interviewing them and a lot of photographers taking pictures; the Polar Bears were used to that. Pablo wandered around the crowd with the chunk of ice on his head.

"How do you feel?" Al asked, putting his arm around me.

"Great! I never felt cold for a second!"

"Shhh. Don't tell our secret," he said, grinning. "You know, you were really good. No quails. You did an excellent job."

Some of the other Polar Bears came over to congratulate me, and if I'd just been awarded a Pulitzer Prize, I couldn't have felt prouder.

Helene came out of the water. I told her, "You know, you don't have to wait to come back to be a water bug. You already are one. You can walk out of anything."

"Thanks," she said, pointing to her toe. "It's O.K. That's life. It's nice."

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Sports Illustrated

IN A LEAGUE BY ITSELF

VIEWPOINT

by ARNOLD SCHECHTER

THE NEW YEAR'S DAY BOWLS WOULD BE BETTER IF THEY WERE TRUE PLAYOFFS

One of the great satisfactions of most spectator sports is that arguments get settled. Fans can wrangle over who'll win—the Steelers or Rams, the Lakers or 76ers, the Phillies or Astros—and then each drama is played to a conclusion.

But major-college football starts more arguments than it settles. The season usually ends in disarray, with bowls and polls. The bowls provide one-shot matchups of teams that are invited to play not only because of their football skills, but also for their ability to attract free-spending fans and draw huge television audiences. The bowls are followed by the polls, in which groups of sportswriters (the Associated Press poll), coaches (the United Press International poll) and other self-appointed experts arrive at rankings on the basis of insufficient evidence.

The main object of the polls is to name the mythical national champion, but they fail even to establish a uniform myth. Different rating systems have disagreed about the top rankings 65 times in the past 91 years. And dozens of lower-rated teams with records equal to or better than the "champions" have been deprived of the chance to prove their worth in head-to-head competition. As the year turns, it may happen yet again. Six teams—Georgia, Florida State, Baylor, North Carolina and BYU—may emerge from their respective bowls with one loss and no ties, and the polls may be left with a choice that could just as well be made by coin flips.

The confusion persists because the college delegates who vote on policy at NCAA conventions are understandably reluctant to tinker with a bowl lineup that last season produced more than \$18 million for Division I-A institutions. They occasionally discuss playoffs, but they usually consider only timid proposals that would still concede to the bowls the choice of dates and participants.

I contend, however, that if the Division I-A schools would forcefully assert their right to control a playoff series completely, the bowls, which depend on

major games to promote tourism, would fall into line, and a successful format for postseason play could easily be devised.

Indeed, a model for that format already exists: the playoff system began by the NAIA in 1958 and adopted in a similar form by the NCAA's lower divisions in 1973. Although most major-college fans know little about its workings or its track record, this system of conducting championships is now used by more than 500 schools in five divisions. Basically, the system works this way: In each division small committees of coaches (NAIA) or athletic directors and conference commissioners (NCAA) follow the top teams, consult by phone and take part in weekly ratings polls. The final poll determines playoff qualifiers, but geography as well as ranking is taken into account: the most common formula is to invite the highest-ranked team in each of four regions and add the four other highest-ranked teams regardless of region.

NCAA finals are held at neutral, warm-weather sites, but all other games are held on the campuses of participants, which saves travel time and money and permits local fans to attend. Matchups and sites are resolved not only by seedings but also by the proximity of the schools, weather conditions, quality and size of facilities, and whether a team will have to travel in consecutive weeks. No playoff series extends past December.

Although the postseason schedule is crowded, with only a week separating most games, the playoffs haven't produced abnormally high injury rates, because, as Delaware Athletic Director Dave Nelson points out, "Football injuries are far more prevalent early on, before players are in shape." Nor has the playing of a few extra games put any unreasonable strain on the athletes' academic performances. According to Coach John Gagliardi, who has led St. John's University of Collegeville, Minn. into postseason play five times, "My playoff teams miss fewer classes in December than the basketball team does."

Naturally, the rating committees have drawn criticism from teams left out of the playoffs. But the committees are unquestionably more thorough than the

voters in the wire service polls, and, says Coach Dave Maurer of Wittenberg University, "There is general agreement that they do a heck of a good job."

And the playoff competition itself is, in certain ways, fairer and more exciting than the bowl play in Division I-A. For one thing, a team cannot play for a tie in hopes of maintaining its reputation at the polls, because ties are broken in overtime. For another, an underrated team can gain more from an upset than being bumped up a notch in the ratings; it can climb as high as its talent will take it.

Consider how simple it would be for Division I-A to adopt the advantageous features of the minor-college system. Imagine, for example, this format:

A committee of athletic directors would monitor the leading contenders all season. The committee would then select 16 teams from among conference champions, co-champions, superior runners-up and independents. The first two rounds would take place on the last Saturday

in November and the first Saturday in December on the campuses of qualifiers. The semifinals would be held on the third Saturday in December, and the finals on New Year's Day. These three games would be rotated among the four major bowls, and the excluded bowl would host a non-playoff game.

The bowl system would emerge unscathed. Each year three of the four major bowls would be guaranteed a holiday-season game directly affecting the national championship. And the minor bowls, which could invite non-playoff teams and early-round losers, wouldn't be hurt, because their outcomes have always been meaningless in deciding national titles. Combined revenues from the playoffs and the non-playoff bowls would result in a greater pie for everyone to divide, including nonparticipants.

Public interest would run higher than ever, because more teams would be in the hunt for the title late in the season. And the playoff series would instantly become an American classic, with the final game rivaling the Super Bowl and the World Series. Best of all, major-college football would at last be elevated from politics to sports, from establishing myths to establishing true champions. **END**



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Shopwalk

by ANITA VERSCHOT

THE TALL STORY IN SKIING THESE DAYS IS A BOOT THAT EXTENDS TO THE KNEE

Just when we thought that our fiber-glass skis and foam-injected boots would be good for 10 years before going out of style, the equipment makers have done it again. After years of claims that shorter skis are easier and better for the recreational skier, long skis are in vogue again. Manufacturers declare that what everyone wants now is "high performance."

Well, maybe, but a skier can't have high performance if he has a hard time turning. So, to go with the longer skis, bootmakers have come up with a block-buster: knee-highs that aren't exclusively for experts and racers. They're for the novice and intermediate skier as well, and they're a blessing, because with the increased leverage they provide, less muscle is needed to make turns. The early models—by Dolomite, Nordica and Tecnica—range in price from \$235 to \$295 and are already in the shops. But the serious skier would be wise to wait for the boots that will let him drive his skis with the precise handling of a sports car—the Kastinger-Porsche Design boot, which will sell for around \$390 the pair.

The sleek, charcoal-colored Porsche has a futuristic look, as though it were custom-made for Darth Vader. But what you don't see is even more impressive. Under the hood, so to speak, is a finely tuned machine that far outperforms the other knee-highs. The boot, built by Kastinger and Co., an Austrian manufacturer that has been making ski boots since 1909, was designed by an unassuming American engineer named Daniel Post, who tinkered with the first crude models in the basement of his Averill Park, N.Y. home.

Post, 51, now a professor in the Engineering Science and Mechanics Department at Virginia Tech, is an inventor who has worked in diverse fields. He holds six patents—two for his revolution-

ary boot. Post is not a crack skier. He and his wife, Frieda, say they are timid on the slopes. But their three children are something else—pro skiers all—and they indirectly planted the idea for a new boot design in their father's head.

Irwin, 27, was a certified ski instructor before he became an engineer, and his sisters, Ellen and Marion, 25-year-old twins, traveled the professional freestyle circuit for five years. Ellen teaches skiing at Winter Park, Colo., and is one of only two women on the Professional Ski Instructors of America demonstration team. Marion, attending Colorado State, had a career that included three overall world freestyle titles and five world ballet championships.

"The children were obsessed with skiing," says Post. "It dominated their conversation day and night. We discussed the mechanics of the sport, frequently with emphasis on the contribution of the boot. Then, eight years ago, I heard a presentation by Billy Kidd in which he talked about the motion of the legs for turning. That crystallized my thinking that a skier could transfer motion

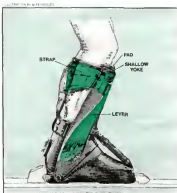
etry, not the material, is the key here."

The early version of Post's boot illustrates the mechanics behind the design. There's a stiff structural member that rises up from the heel around to a precise point on the shin just below the knee. The structure, or lever, gives the boot lateral stiffness. The feature that makes Post's design better than that of other knee-highs is that as the shin of his boots this structure attaches to a stiff plastic yoke that connects to a soft flexible cuff hugging the strongest part of the calf. When the leg moves, so does the yoke, transmitting the motion of the front of the leg to the bottom part of the boot and the ski.

"With a conventional ski boot, the side of the leg pushes against the sidewall of the boot, causing it to 'angulate' and edge the ski," says Post. "With our concept, the boot angulates through the action of the front of the leg. As the skier flexes his legs to angulate the skis, his lower legs also rotate through a vertical axis. This is an automatic and natural motion dictated by human anatomy that occurs unconsciously with angulation."

As a result of this rotation, the front of the leg moves farther sideways than does the side of the leg. Boots actuated by the front of the leg therefore yield a greater angulation than the conventional boot. Post calls this "amplification of edging," and in practice, it means that with a smaller body motion, a skier wearing the new boot can achieve the same angulation of the ski as a low-boot skier. The advantages include quicker maneuvers and less fatigue. The novice finds his first snowplows are a cinch, and the advanced skier can carve parallel turns with more precision and ease.

There are other advantages to the Kastinger-Porsche boot. Because the upper part of the leg controls the ski, there is no need to immobilize the ankle, so the foot is less constricted and more comfortable than in a conventional boot. The boot, it is hoped, will significantly reduce injuries by eliminating boot-top fractures of the tibia and fibula. Also, the Kastinger-Porsche boot is designed so that the ankle is free to absorb part of the shock in a fall, and while the strong brace on top of the calf makes recovery from a



A cutaway view of the Kastinger-Porsche shows how the boot hugs the leg. The strap, pad, yoke and lever are highlighted in green.

to the skis more efficiently with a different style boot."

By the spring of 1972, father and son were trying out the first prototypes, made of old laced-up boots and steel uppers. "We used materials that were easy to construct," says Post, "because geom-

continued

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SHOPWALK continued

precarious position easier, the knee will not be any more vulnerable than it is in lower boots.

Eddie Ferguson, the 1973 world freestyle champ who used to be called "Airborne Eddie," tested Post's prototype in 1977. "For two weeks we put it through every stage there is," he says, "of the way from snowplow turns to ski-slips down the hill, so mogul skiing, too, of course, you name it. I found it did everything I wanted better and more easily than shorter boots I had skied with. After trying the other knee-highs earlier this season, I found Dr. Post's concept of that rotational motion in the lateral movement to be very, very effective."

"I knew right away that it was a revolutionary idea," says Hermann Kastinger, the 34-year-old president of his family's firm, who first learned of Post's invention when he checked a list of new patents. Three years ago, Kastinger called Ferdinand Porsche, 43, grandson of the famous car maker, who runs Porsche Design in Austria, and asked him to put a beautiful body on the boot.

The finished Kastinger-Porsche is adjustable from top to bottom to fit a skier's size and ability. Even the forward lean is mechanically controlled. It has an external spring, reaching from the boot toe to the lower shin that acts as a shock absorber and a cable around the ankle that's secured to a padded strap around the instep that draws the instep back into the heel pocket for a more comfortable fit. And—special blessing—the boot has no buckle closings to fiddle with while your fingers freeze. Instead, the buck of the boot lunge out to allow you to step quickly in and out.

The next thing about this boot is that, for once, a piece of ski equipment has not been perfected solely to help racers go faster. "Ski racers are so aggressive, they don't have any edging problems," says Ken Harrell, who is vice-president of Kastinger U.S.A. "It's the beginners who need a lift."

Kastinger is planning full-fledged production for the 1981-82 season, but this winter the boots will be as hard to come by as pandas. Only 1,000 pairs have been produced so far—all in men's sizes—and 400 are earmarked for the U.S. These will be sold primarily to those Kastinger calls "opinion leaders" in the ski business. By next year, though, any skier who wants to will be able to weave down the slopes in Porsches.

END

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A JUNIOR ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM

19TH HOLE

THE READERS TAKE OVER

Edited by GAY FLOOD

BYU STYLE

Sir,

Congratulations on Bob Ottum's article about Brigham Young University (*When the Latter-Day Saints Go Marching In*, Dec. 8). I appreciate SI's recognition that differences in convictions and religious beliefs are a precious right we enjoy in this country, and that being different isn't necessarily wrong. "Mormons" and BYU Cougars are proud to have a style of their own, and we thank you for pointing it out without pointing a finger of scorn at what we value so highly.

We agree that in today's world "... purity gets you no points," but we'll stick with our standards just the same and let the Cougars continue to score the points. They seem to have a knack for it, don't they?

PAUL J. BLANCHARD
Portland, Ore.

Sir,

My compliments to Bob Ottum for an excellent article. However, baseball was one sport not mentioned. Under the coaching of Dr. Glen Tuckett, now athletic director, the BYU baseball team won 10 consecutive Western Athletic Conference Northern Division championships between 1967 and 1976. During this time, BYU won two NCAA regional titles and twice appeared in the College World Series, in 1968 and 1971. Under Gary Pullins, the current coach, BYU has continued its Northern Division dominance.

PAL ELOBROCK
Kailua, Hawaii

Sir:

Two fine American athletes, Mike Render and Stan Younger, who, incidentally, are black, recently contributed greatly to the success of the BYU baseball program. They experienced the same challenges and opportunities to excel as did Homer Jones and Eric Lane, who pioneered in football. Mike and Stan met or exceeded the required standards of excellence. This was done at a price, but as a result they are a cut above their contemporaries at other universities and have gained adult survival skills that will sustain them throughout their lives. They also helped win the WAC championship in 1979.

Finally, although Render is not of the Mormon faith, he is a brother in Christ and a terrific human being.

Ignorance, like fear, lives in two places: in the dark and in the mind. BYU is courageously trying to eliminate them in both places.

BERNARD RENDER
(proud father)
Indianapolis

Sir,

After reading the profile of Brigham Young University, I came to the conclusion that Mormon life is dull, plastic and racist. How can BYU expect to attract outstanding black student-athletes when it offers a backward social/cultural environment that was typical of the 1950s?

MICHAEL GREFFIN
South Bend, Ind.

Sir,

I found it interesting that the university doesn't allow beards when old Brigham himself wore one.

ROGER WERDEL
Arcata, Calif.

Sir:

Brigham Young Athletic Director Glen Tuckett was mistaken when he said only BYU and Indiana finished in the Top 20 in football and basketball last year. North Carolina and Ohio State also appeared in the final football and basketball polls of both the AP and UPI. In addition, Missouri and Purdue were each included in three of those four final rankings.

RICK BREWER
Sports Information Director
University of North Carolina
Chapel Hill, N.C.

THAT FIGHT

Sir,

William Nack's coverage of the Sugar Ray Leonard-Roberto Duran rematch (*The Big Bellyache*, Dec. 8) was sensational, emphasizing the brilliance of Sugar Ray's performance. That was vintage Leonard in New Orleans. But let's not write off Duran. A third Duran-Leonard match would be in order if Duran first stopped Thomas Hearns—and as quickly as Roberto lost his well-deserved macho image, he would regain it.

JIM HARTMAN
Buffalo

Sir,

William Nack's article says it all. The Duran-Leonard rematch was a big bellyache for the fans and for the sport. I say no más, no más to repeat matches within one year of any fight. That way other fighters would have a chance at the champ, and the fans would once again enjoy the sport.

SCOTT ANTHONIO
Wauconda, Ill.

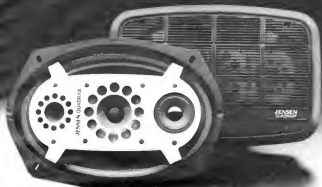
Sir:

I still don't believe that Duran quit because of stomach cramps.

BRIAN CALLAWAY
San Francisco

continued

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19TH HOLE continued

Sir:

One might say that Sugar Ray cramped Roberto's style.

BOB MUTTER
Athens, Texas

Sir:

Sugar Ray Leonard didn't beat Roberto Duran. Duran beat Duran.

EARL DORTCH
North Riverside, Ill.

THE BLACK GHOST

Sir:

I find it surprising and appalling that a major sports magazine would include an article glorifying someone who has spent his life breaking the law (Shibby's *It's the Black Ghost*, Dec. 8). Trespassing and poaching are violations of one of America's basic freedoms, the right to own and hold property. People like Art Brodie only make it harder on the average hunter or fisherman who obeys the law.

LARRY SULLIVAN
Frostproof, Fla.

Sir:

The article about the poacher really turned me off. Guys like Art Brodie are not the heroes, and you may think they're heroes, but I think they're outlaws.

Also, the picture of Brodie setting out decoys here in Wisconsin for about 50 years and have never seen such a stupid technique.

ERNEST E. BRUNS
Madison, Wis.

Sir:

Robert Boyle deserves an ice-cold beer and a good cigar for his well-written article. Art Brodie must be an excellent outdoorsman and a true individual. America needs more people like the Black Ghost.

WARREN BYERS WATKINS JR.
Durham, N.C.

STEELER'S STORY

Sir:

I delayed reading Frank Deford's review of the TV movie *Fighting Back* (TV/RADIO, Dec. 8) until after I'd seen the show, because reviews usually have a way of influencing opinion. Not this time. Deford to the contrary, I think that the scenes showing Rocky Bleier with Steelers owner Art Rooney at the start of the movie did reveal that Rocky was troubled. Since Bleier didn't tell Rooney about his self-doubt, one assumes it was something he was very sensitive about.

I just hope the rest of the country liked the movie more than Deford did. Being from the Pittsburgh area, I'm proud of it.

DAN MAJNIA
Bethel Park, Pa.

Sir:

I thank Frank Deford for the warning about the TV movie on Rocky Bleier. It's a shame that moviemakers feel they must incorporate romance and sex into the stories of fine individuals. I can only hope that if a movie is made of the life of the late Cal quarterback,

Joe Roth, who died of cancer in 1977, it will be done in an unsensational manner. If there is an athlete who displayed more courage than Bleier, it's Roth.

ROBERT J. KUWADA
Long Beach, Calif.

CARDS ON THE TABLE

Sir:

Franz Lidz' article on APBA Major League Baseball (*SIDELINE*, Dec. 8) has caused a commotion in my household. After reading it, I admitted to my family that I too am an APBA addict. Now I can come out into the open and shake those itty-bitty red and white dice to get the 1977 Red Sox against the 1977 Yankees. But the fiction of APBA baseball resembles fact too exactly. My APBA Red Sox pitching staff always collapses in September, and the hated Yankees win the pennant, just as in real life.

FRANK DRIGOTAS III
Norway, Maine

Sir:

I am a Strat-o-Matic Baseball fanatic, but thanks to Franz Lidz' article on APBA baseball my wife now realizes that I'm not crazy just because I have my cards run laps around the kitchen table after a bad game. The cards do come to life!

KEVIN T. PUSTA
East Lansing, Mich.

RIDING THE RAILS

Sir:

Your Nov. 24 *SIDELINE* on the railcycle conjures up pleasant fantasies. The open vistas, the sense of freedom and challenge all act as a powerful magnet, drawing the potential railcyclist to the tracks.

However, such an idyllic picture is clouded by some harsh realities. Anyone engaged in railcycling would be trespassing on railroad property, and the second-leading cause of death associated with railroads arises from trespassing. In 1979, 516 trespassers—those with no legal right to be on rail property—were killed and 805 were injured.

Although the inventor of the railcycle usually makes use of unused or abandoned lines, his occasional use of active lines is extremely disturbing. Even more disturbing is the casual description of his head-on meeting with a train coming around a bend.

You say that Dick Smart "fears what would happen if this railcycle" were used by people not as careful as he." We fear what Dr. Smart intends to do with his recently acquired patent on his invention. Such a dangerous pastime does not deserve encouragement.

LAWRENCE H. KAUFMAN
Vice-President, Information and
Public Affairs
Association of American Railroads
Washington, D.C.

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